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ABSTRACT

Achieving Education for All (EFA) in Ghana and many parts of sub-Saharan Africa remains an elusive goal. Extensive research in diverse countries has revealed that formalized systems that work on fixed timetables, a loaded curriculum, and trained teachers, are often not performing as well in rural environments in providing basic literacy, numeracy, and other skills/competencies relevant to the local environment. Although Ghana has developed a variety of programs to help with EFA goals, EFA objectives and Ghana poverty reduction strategy suggest that reaching children in rural deprived areas demands more innovative approaches because of the harsh environment. Ghana's efforts to attain Education for All in the coming 5-10 years largely depend on their commitment to supporting educational services for 50% of the children currently out of school in northern Ghana. It depends on the policymaker's ability to look beneath the realities of formal education systems and understand the context in which learning takes place in deprived rural areas. Complementary education approaches are proving not only to be effective but essential in assisting children, who otherwise would not be reached by the formal system, escape the cycle of illiteracy and secure a better future. Following an executive summary, the report contains five sections: (1) "The Challenge"; (2) "Research Design"; (3) "Preliminary Findings of International Study"; (4) "Preliminary Findings of Ghana Study"; and (5) "The Way Forward and Key Recommendations." Annexes include field study research questions; research activities; a list of non-governmental organizations implementing literacy programs; a list of civil society organizations; and impact level indicators. (Contains 30 notes, 14 tables,

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Final Report

Reaching Underserved Populations with Basic Education in Deprived Areas of Ghana:

Emerging Good Practices



CARE International Ghana/Togo/Benin
January 2003

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Acronyms

AAG	Action Aid Ghana
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAMFED	Cambridge Education Fund for Girls
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CRT	Criterion Reference Tests
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DA	District Assembly
DEO	District Education Officer
EFA	Education For All
FSP	Feeder School Programme
GAR	Gross Admission Rate
GDCA	Ghana Danish Communities Association
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GES	Ghana Education Service
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GV	Ghana Friendship Groups in Denmark
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JSS	Junior Secondary School
L1	Mother Tongue
LLIL	Local Language Initial Literacy Programme
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
PMT	Performance Monitoring Tests
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QUIPS	Quality Improvement in Primary Schools
RCS	Residential Camp Schools
REV	Rural Education Volunteer
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SDA	Social Development Agencies
SfL	School for Life
SMC	School Management Committee
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
UWRDP	Upper West Regional Development Programme
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

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Research Team

The following individuals comprised the research team:

- Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford Overall Lead Researcher, Associates for Change
- Dr. Kwame Akyeampong (Ghana Researcher), Institute of Education,
University of Cape Coast
- Mr. William Ahadzie (Documentation Analysis), Center for Social Policy
Studies, University of Ghana-Legon
- Mr. Juliana Osei (Ghana Researcher), Girls Education Unity,
Ministry of Education
- Ms. Elvina Quaison (Research Assistant), Associates for Change
- Dr. Joan Sullivan-Owomoyela (International Researcher), CARE USA
- Dr. Frank Boahene, (West Africa Researcher), CARE Ghana
- Mr. Peter McAllister Overall Team Manager, CARE Ghana

Executive Summary

1. Overview

Achieving Education for All (EFA) in Ghana and many parts of Sub Saharan Africa remains an elusive goal for the majority of countries, in the coming decade (World Bank/IMF, 2001). Extensive research in a variety of countries has revealed that the formalized systems, which work on fixed timetables, a loaded curriculum, and depend mostly on trained teachers, are often not performing as well in rural environments with respect to providing basic literacy, numeracy and other skills/ competencies that are relevant to the local environment. One hundred and thirty million children, two thirds of whom are girls continue to have no access to basic education in Sub Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 1999). In fact, net enrollment ratios for sixteen sub Saharan African countries have worsened since Jomtien (UNESCO, 1998). The Education for All Framework for sub-Saharan Africa identifies the need to consider accelerated and non-formal alternative (complementary) approaches for reaching underserved children particularly in remote and often harsh deprived environments.

Several factors contribute to Africa's inability to increase its primary school enrollment and completion rates over the last two decades. According to UNESCO's (2000) Country Assessment for Ghana the main reasons include: direct and indirect costs to parents, poor quality of basic education, lack of teachers and infrastructure. Other contextual factors include: HIV/AIDS, political upheaval and conflict in destabilizing populations and educational systems in several African Countries.

Ghana has developed a variety of policies and programs to help reach the EFA goals. The Education for All objectives and Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy suggest that reaching children in rural deprived areas will demand more innovative approaches, which take into account the harsh environment. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) recognizes this fact and declares that the Government will support over 100,000 children access alternative forms of education in deprived rural areas (Government of Ghana, 2002). The GPRS also recognizes that teachers, particularly trained teachers, are often unwilling to serve in rural deprived areas of the country which hinder the Ghana Education Service's ability to provide the necessary services (i.e. formal schools) in these areas (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001). This evidence lends credibility to the argument that alternative complementary routes to achieving basic education in Ghana, particularly those that focus on educating girls and other underserved populations, need to be a high priority on the Government agenda.

2. Research focus, objectives and method

In preparation for the development of their new education strategic objective (2004-2010) USAID/Ghana commissioned CARE International in Ghana/Togo/Benin¹ to investigate

¹ CARE International in Ghana conducted the research in collaboration with Associates for Change and researchers from the University of Cape Coast (Institute of Education), the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana-Legon, and Ghana Education Service (Girls' Education Unit).

complementary education approaches that would help promote access to and increase quality of educational programs for under-served populations in Ghana particularly those in the north of the country. The main research questions were:

- What types of complimentary education services have been effective in reaching the under-served, especially female, populations in rural deprived areas; and,
- What complimentary education mechanisms/processes have been the most successful and why?

The study used primarily a qualitative design (i.e., case study approach) that was supported by a documentary analysis and program profiling of selected alternative education programs around the world. Practical experience of international and indigenous NGOs brought a wealth of experience to the study of alternative approaches to education. This, combined with a literature review, provided a balance between the field realities and academic theory/rigor.

The research team surveyed the most successful alternative education models, which have achieved a level of scale and recognition within the international community, in order to draw lessons for Ghana. The projects were analyzed from a contextual perspective that focused on program objectives, the principles and modes of operation, impact and effectiveness. From this, project profiles (international, regional, and national) were developed.

3. Key findings from the international study

The international survey revealed that the majority of complementary education systems and interventions working around the world are supported through the assistance of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) with varied input from national governments. The vast majority of these models have been developed through extensive field experience of the agencies involved and a long-term commitment to effecting change in the areas they serve. Key findings revealed several important themes; these include:

1. Socio-cultural context often determines the approaches best suited for supporting education;
2. Human resource capacity needs to be developed in a comprehensive and substantial manner within the local government structure and the civil society sector for effective delivery;
3. Gender equality is critical to ensure successful project implementation; and,
4. Community-based participation is essential for sustainability.

Complementary education systems provide structured programs of learning in a non-institutional environment based on a learner-centered curriculum and flexible schedule. The programs are designed to eliminate both the defects and traditions of formal schooling. Many different forms of complementary education systems are derived principally from the village or community school concept as pioneered by the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC) schooling initiative (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2000). Many of these education initiatives have been evaluated as being effective in increasing access to under-served groups of hard-to-reach children, and improved

achievement especially in literacy and numeracy. A number of factors have been identified as having contributed to the success of these programs (Hyde, 1999). They include the following: the school as an organic part of the community, community involvement in school governance, local language as the medium of instruction, volunteer teachers, partnerships and collaboration with local education authorities.

4. Key findings from the Ghana study

The field work component was designed to assess successful alternative routes to education for out of school children in the northern and Upper West regions of Ghana. The field research team focused on two programs considered successful for in-depth study. These are the (i) School for Life (SFL) programme; initiated by the Dagbon traditional council, Ghana Danish Communities Association (GDCA) and the Ghana Friendship Groups in Denmark (GV), and (ii) the Rural Education Volunteer (REV) programme initiated by Action Aid Ghana (AAG). Other subsidiary interventions were also examined such as the: Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Childscope (UNICEF), Youth Alive (Action Aid) programme and the Local Language Initial Literacy Programme (LILL) in relation to their impact in addressing challenges of out of school children.

The Northern regions of Ghana suffer from an acute shortage of teachers in rural areas leading to a situation where many schools are simply not effective. Although the challenges of teaching in rural areas in Ghana are similar, the northern region presents a particularly difficult challenge for teachers especially the newly trained teacher. Another difficulty of providing education for children in the north is the nature of community settlements, which tends to be small, sparsely populated and widely scattered. Strict adherence to beliefs that formal education alienates children from their original culture has worked against efforts aimed at providing education for all children in the north.

Field research indicated that about 39% of children in Lawra district in the Upper West are out of school and about 40% of communities in the Sissala District are without schools. In Lawra district about 78% of the people can be classified as illiterate and only 5% of the over 11 year olds have ever been to primary school. Several key challenges emerged during the study of educational programming in the deprived rural areas in northern Ghana. These are:

1. Distance and small populations limits formal education opportunities;
2. Chronic teacher absenteeism and lack of commitment adversely affects the formal learning environment; and,
3. Minimal engagement by communities and local institutions limits the quality of the learning environment.

The lack of community understanding about their rights and what changes they were capable of making (e.g., holding teachers accountable for their attendance) was a major theme that permeated the study. Poor communities felt dis-empowered and helpless in the face of GES officers who were viewed as close colleagues of "trained teachers". Most communities were hesitant to report absentee teachers for fear that the GES would not post additional teachers to their communities forcing the school to be closed.

School for Life

Currently 767 communities have been reached by School for Life program between 1995 to 2001. Since the SFL inception they have enrolled more than 50,000 learners. SFL has covered about 25% of the communities in the districts it has worked in over the last 7-year period. Within this period it enrolled about 36,044 pupils and mainstreamed 22,090 into the formal school system. This represents over a 50% success rate in terms of the number of students SFL has been able to mainstream into the formal system. Out of the total mainstreamed, about 41% were girls and 59% boys. Within the 7 year period only 3105 students dropped out of the formal system, at the same time about 11,000 SFL graduates were unable to access formal education due to lack of finance, lack of schools in close proximity and other educational barriers.

The Rural Education Volunteer Program

The Rural Education Volunteer (REV) program was piloted in October 2000 in the Sissala District of the Upper West Region and later extended to Lawra, Jirapa Lambussie and Wa districts. The Sissala District Education Oversight Committee, GES, Action Aid Ghana and the Upper West Regional Development Program (UWRDP) undertook a joint community sensitization and animation process to alert communities of this new initiative. The first set of 20 Rural Education Volunteers (REVs) were appointed and posted to 14 deprived schools in the district. Twenty more were appointed in October 2001, bringing the total to 40 (24 males, 16 females) teaching in 26 schools, handling 70 classes with a total enrolment of 1,229 (670 females 559 males) in 29 communities in Sissala District.

The Upper West Region Development Program now has 250 REVs (183 females and 67 males) with 60 REVs (17 males and 43 females) in Sissala district, 100 (55 females and 45 males) in Lawra district, 50 (48 females 2 males) in Jirapa-Lambussie district and 40 (37 females 3 males) in Wa district. Nadowli District is planning to recruit 50. A significant emphasis is placed on recruiting female teachers in these areas in order to improve the climate for girls' education in the schools (see table 6).

The projects were examined for access and retention, achievement and performance, and sustainability (district financial commitment). A multiplicity of approaches was used to examine these issues include semi-structured interviews with stakeholders at the district (e.g., District Education officials) and local community level (e.g., teachers, student, community members), and a review of indicators relating to access and retention. The following table reveals the findings regarding access and retention:

Some of the achievements of the REV program that emerged from the field are summarized as follows:

- REVs are projecting a positive image of the teaching profession in the sight of rural communities who have traditionally seen teachers as important role models. Community members and School Administrators cited comportment of REVs, regularity at school and punctuality as having significantly improved the image of teachers in their communities. In appreciation of this, some communities are supporting REVs with foodstuffs, free accommodation and land for farming.

- Fifteen female REVs have gained admission to various Teacher Training Colleges and Polytechnics through the support offered by the REV program.
- The REV program is having a significant impact on increasing the numbers of female teachers in the rural deprived areas of the country. Over 90% of the REV teachers were women in the Sissala District. Action Aid is encouraging most of the districts to select females due to the positive impact they can have on girls education.

The study found that the School for Life program is successful in ensuring that:

- (i) children receive quality education – children are able to reach a satisfactory level of proficiency in reading, writing and have the ability to do basic mathematics,
- (ii) communities especially parents share in the success of children's achievement through the organisation of graduation ceremonies in which graduates demonstrate their literacy and numeracy abilities,
- (iii) it has an efficient and effective system of in-service support for teachers to reinforce good practices and deal with facilitators instructional challenges,
- (iv) Communities play an active role in managing the school system. Communities act as watchdogs to ensure that facilitators are doing their job and that children go to school.

NGO's and other civil society organisations are proving to be the most effective implementers of these programs due to their flexibility to adapt and ability to respond to highly deprived rural contexts. These programs are demonstrating a high level of quality and impact in achieving literacy in populations of children that would otherwise not be reached or unable to access the formal system due to socio-economic and cultural constraints. These programs are also demonstrating that ensuring quality is the key to assisting poor rural children who often have limited time, support and resources to learn basic literacy skills. Children in these contexts are caught between the traditional norms of survival and inability to escape the poverty cycle fueled by a poor quality formal education system and high opportunity costs.

6. Way forward

The national and international study revealed several key findings, which have been put into recommendations for future USAID strategic education programming. These are:

1. Integrating contextual understanding into programming: An intimate understanding of the context, and barriers to accessing quality education opportunities are the underlying factors in the implementation of successful complementary education programs. Key components of complementary education programming are identified and potential programming options listed in Recommendation 1.
2. Improving Civil Society capacity: The majority of complementary programs are implemented by Civil Society Organizations because of their commitment and

access to underserved populations. In order to enhance Civil Society's capacity to be an effective education service provider, it is important to build Civil Society Organizations institutional and technical capacity. Professional CSOs may also provide services to strengthen local authorities capacity. Strategies for building the Civil Society resource base are listed in Recommendation 2.

3. Mobilizing broad-based constituencies to advocate: Communities have limited understanding of their rights and how to engage productively with power structures (e.g., district authorities). It is critical that communities are made aware of their rights and how their 'voices' and concerns may be channeled upward. Strategies for the enhancement of mechanisms to promote grass-roots advocacy are listed in Recommendation 3.
4. Increasing district capacity to engage with Civil Society: The Civil Society sector and local authorities have engaged in productive collaborations to sustain financial and programmatic commitments to alternative education programs. This work, especially in the areas of planning and monitoring, needs to be continued. Recommendation 4 elaborates upon this strategic option.

7. Key recommendations

Recommendation 1—Increase access to, and quality of complementary, education programs for underserved populations.

The international and national research has yielded common elements that are critical to ensure successful implementation of complementary education for under-served populations. These elements include: 1) understanding of the local context; 2) flexible school calendar and timetable; 3) skill-based curriculum using the local language as medium of instruction; and 4) community-based participation in the learning environment.

Recommendation 2—*Enhance quality of education by strengthening the institutional capacity of Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities to be effective education service providers.*

The research revealed that under-served populations have a variety of socio- economic and cultural characteristics that demand specific (flexible and simple) context dependent approaches. Through the strengthening of Civil Society Organizations to be effective service providers, spread is encouraged in a systematic and systemic manner with quality as an underlying element.

Recommendation 3—*Increase Civil Society participation in education policy debate by mobilizing broad-based constituencies to advocate for quality basic education.*

By strengthening and developing strong functional Civil Society networks an indigenous forum is developed that allows CSOs to work collectively to share lessons learned, coordinate resources (human, financial, and material), and promote grass-roots advocacy.

Recommendation 4—*Increase district capacity support for improving the conditions for learning in deprived rural areas.*

Continuing to enhance and build upon the work done under the current USAID-funded QUIPS program to improve the capacity of local government institutions (e.g., District Assembly, District Education Office) will strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the education structure.

8. Summary

Ghana's efforts to attain Education for All in the coming five to ten years will largely depend on their commitment to supporting educational services for 50% of the children currently out of school in northern Ghana. It will depend on the policy maker's ability to look beneath the realities of formal education systems and understand the context in which learning takes place in deprived rural areas of the country. Complementary education approaches are proving to be not only effective but essential in assisting children, who would otherwise not be reached by the formal system, escape the cycle of illiteracy and secure a better future for the next generation of children.

1. The Challenge

1.1 Overview

Achieving Education for All (EFA) in Ghana and many parts of Sub Saharan Africa remains an elusive goal for the majority of countries, in the coming decade (World Bank/ IMF, 2001). Extensive research in a variety of countries has revealed that the formalized systems, which work on fixed timetables, a loaded curriculum, and depend mostly on trained teachers, are often not performing in rural environments with respect to providing basic literacy, numeracy and other skills/competencies that are relevant to the local environment. Studies by Schaeffer (2000) suggest that despite the increasing numbers of children gaining access to the formal school system the overall literacy and numeracy levels of children globally reveal very poor results in terms of effectiveness and individual achievement. Studies by Action Aid (2001) reveal that 'brick and mortar systems of education' alone will not improve the achievement rates of children and most importantly the literacy levels. Studies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank indicate that the vast majority of sub-Saharan African countries will also fall short in meeting their EFA gender equity targets. The Education for All Framework for sub-Saharan Africa identifies the need to consider accelerated and non-formal alternative (complementary) approaches for reaching underserved children particularly in remote and often harsh deprived environments¹.

The challenge for achieving EFA goals has been greatest for Africa. Less than 10% of African children eligible for early childhood programs are enrolled in childcare centers. The average in West Africa is 3.6%, and in countries like Niger, the figure is as low as 0.52% (Mid-decade Review 1996). The continent's average literacy rate of 56.8% in 1995 was almost fourteen percent lower than the global average of 70.4%. In absolute numbers, Africa's illiterate population rose from 126 million in 1980 to 141 million in 1995 (UNESCO, 1996). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics notes that thirteen of the fifteen countries with less than half of the official age population enrolled in school are in Africa. Although only 12% of the world's children between the ages of six and eleven live in Africa, the region accounts for one-third of the world's children in that age group that are out of school (World Bank 2000). One hundred and thirty million children, two thirds of whom are girls continue to have no access to basic education in Sub Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 1999). In fact, net enrollment ratios for sixteen sub Saharan African countries have worsened since the Jomtien 1990 EFA conference (UNESCO, 1998).

Several factors contribute to Africa's inability to increase its primary school enrollment and completion rates over the last two decades. According to UNESCO's (2000) Country Assessment for Ghana the main reasons include: direct and indirect costs to parents, poor quality of basic education, lack of teachers and infrastructure. Recent research in Sub Saharan Africa also suggests that the AIDS pandemic substantially contributes to the out of school problem by increasing the number of orphaned children, reducing the number of qualified teachers and reducing the families capacity to support their children in school (Casely-Hayford, 2001).

¹ For purposes of this study complementary and alternative education programs are used interchangeably and may refer to 1) programs providing learners with a fundamental knowledge base in the areas of literacy, numeracy and other essential skills/competencies so they may enter a formal (government) school or 2) education programs that provide basic skill attainment in literacy and numeracy that may be transferred to other areas of their lives, but do not necessarily promote gaining entrance to the formal school structure.

Other contextual factors include political upheaval and conflict, which destabilize populations and educational systems in several African countries. There has been a significant amount of research evidence suggesting that structural adjustment has had a very negative impact on access and participation of the poor in basic education in Africa. Findings reveal that a larger proportion of Ghana's education budget goes to debt servicing compared to educational investment as part of Ghana's Structural Adjustment Participatory Assessment Findings (Djangmah, 1998). This is not atypical. For example, in the Ivory Coast, 32% of export earnings was spent on debt servicing. In Mali the budget allocations for primary education and debt servicing are equal (PLAN International 2000).

1.2. Challenges of attaining EFA goals

1.2.1 *Socio-economic challenges*

The socio-economic context of underserved areas needs to be understood in the context of the pressures that developing countries face. In African education systems often the poorest regions receive the lowest subsidy per school age child. Remote rural areas that are sparsely populated often do not have enough children of school-going age to justify the establishment of a school so children who live in these "hard to reach" areas often have to walk long distances to school. Where these schools exist, the buildings are oftentimes in poor condition, equipped with inadequate learning materials and with teachers who are ill trained or untrained, underpaid, and lack motivation.

Whether or not a child in an undeserved area attends school depends also on the costs associated with schooling. These costs are of two kinds: direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include contributions—in-kind and in-cash—that contribute to the construction and repair of schools, recurrent contributions to teachers' salaries, and the costs of schooling accessories such as uniforms, books and writing instruments. The indirect costs of schooling are largely in the form of income lost from a child's potential employment. Opportunity costs are also in the form of the invisible work that children perform in the domestic arena. For mothers especially, sending their daughters to school means more domestic responsibilities for themselves, which indirectly affect their income earning abilities. Studies in Ghana suggest that the direct costs of education are one of the main reasons children are not attending school (GSS, 2000).

The parents or guardians of children mostly incur direct costs of education. Parents who may have thought themselves capable of financing their children's education may discover with time, that they are unable to raise the money required for the variety of costs associated with schooling. Some of which include providing food allowances for children attending school, providing transport funds etc. In a study conducted in Ghana, about 43% of the dropouts mentioned the lack of financial support as the main reason for dropping out of school (Boakye et al 1997). In some places, however, such as the coastal areas of Ghana, parents are seasonal migrants who leave their children in the care of grandparents who are unable to undertake the financial support for the children's schooling. As a result, the children finance their own education, often working after school hours as weavers, fishermen and traders selling food items (Casely-Hayford 2002).

Finally, children help to increase the labor power of parents both by engaging in domestic chores thus freeing their parents for income generating activities or by working to subsidize family income. In extremely poor families, children contribute as much as 40% to family income. They may be sent to school only when the labor needs of the family have been met

in order to ensure household food security. Newly married men in deprived rural areas are therefore less inclined to send all their children to school because “there will be no extra children to spare for school”. As echoed by one rural parent, “those on the farm feed those at the school” (Casely-Hayford 2002, p. 40).

1.2.2 Socio-cultural and contextual challenges

There are a variety of socio-cultural challenges to achieving the goals of EFA. Illiteracy, particularly female illiteracy, is one of these challenges which is higher in most African counties (UNICEF, 2001). Illiterate parents are less able to assess the benefits of schooling for their children, especially their daughters, and are therefore less inclined to put their children through school (Mensah, 1992). Research on women in adult literacy programs reveal that women are more likely to send their children to school, keep them in school, and encourage them to read at home (Lloyd, C and A. Blanc, 1996).

School calendar and schooling hours may be incompatible with family realities in the rural areas. Often the official school calendar conflicts with economic activities, so that in the mornings when rural families need their children to assist with chores both at home and on the farm school is also typically in session. Sometimes during intensive farming periods, parents counteract the incompatibility of schooling and their economic needs by sending children below school going age in order for older siblings to support the family on the farms.

Another socio-cultural factor that works to the disadvantage of girls is the cultural perception concerning their role in the family and society and the preference to invest in boys' education. Consequently, girls are often the last to go to school and the first to be withdrawn. Several studies suggest that traditional societies preference for boys education restricts girls ability to access formal education systems (Kingdon, G, 1997). Several other socio cultural practices also impede on girls education including: early marriage and fostering (Wolf and Odonkor, 1997; Casely-Hayford, 2000).

Parents who are willing to provide their daughters with an education worry about the potential dangers that their daughters may face in walking to schools that are far from their communities. Usually, rural parents prefer that female teachers educate their daughters because it gives them confidence that they will be protected from sexual harassment. Despite the cultural perception that schooling is irrelevant for girls and the inherent dangers of walking long distances to school, girls who stay in school, often have to contend with insensitive teacher's and practices in the classroom which are not gender sensitive (Mackinnon, P, 2000). In many parts of Sub Saharan Africa, teachers continue to harass girls sexually or impede on their learning time by sending them off on errands during and after school hours (Leach et al, 2002).

1.3 The Ghana context

Ghana has developed a variety of policies and programs to help reach the EFA goals. A full Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy and a Basic Education Sector Improvement Project (BESIP) were implemented in the mid to late 1990s. Several programs designed to improve the access and participation, quality and management of the system were designed with development partners support. A Girls' Education Unit was created in the Ministry of Education, District Girls' Education officers were employed and a Minister of Basic, Secondary and Girl Child Education appointed. During the latter part of the 1990's,

between 30 - 35% of the national recurrent budget was allocated to education, 60% of which went directly to enhancing primary education (DFID, 2001; PLAN 2000).

Despite all these efforts, access to basic education in Ghana is far from complete. Access and participation rates stand at about 75 percent (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). The retention rates for Ghanaian children who start primary one is also very low. Ministry of Education data reveals that of the 75% of school children who attend schools, 25% drop out before completing the first six years of basic education, and another 20% drop out after completing the nine years of basic education. The quality of education provided for the percentage of children who stay in school is also dismal. Results of the Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) administered to primary 6 children across the country in 1999, showed that only about 36% had attained mastery in English while 31% had attained mastery in mathematics. Regional differences in the quality of education have also been noted. The mastery level in English for public school children in the capital city is about 20% while in northern Ghana, the figures are as low as 3% (MOE, 2002). Data on the quality of education across the generations shows that this situation is only a recent phenomenon. Controlling for years of schooling, older Ghanaians score higher on mathematics and English tests than younger Ghanaians (Akyeampong and Stephens 2000).

The Ghana Living Standards Survey Fourth Round reveals that poverty rates are deepening in deprived areas of Ghana and lessening in areas where the poverty factors are less severe (GSS, 2000; GSS, 1998). The Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Central, and Western regions have the highest incidence of poverty in the country where more than 50% of people live below the poverty line and as many as 30% live below the extreme poverty line (people with less than 700,000 cedis per year to live on)². These are the same areas where the highest percentages of children remain out of school.

Since the 1987 Education Reforms some gains have been made nationally in improving access to basic education but the northern regions (Northern, Upper West and Upper East) still lag behind the rest of the regions in Ghana. GER in all three northern regions fall far below the national GER³. Estimates based on the 2000 population census indicate that the GER for primary schooling in 2000/2001 is about 78.6%. On the number of pupils enrolled in school, for example, the Northern Region ranks 8 out of 10 regions on the national level, followed by Upper East and Upper West.

Northern Ghana also suffers from an acute shortage of both trained and untrained teachers. This compounds the task of improving educational access at the basic level. Some districts in the Northern Region, for example, have a pupil-teacher ratio of about 53 pupils per teacher; have low teacher-school ratio and high pupil-school ratio - which indicates that school size in the north is predominantly quite small. The incidence of children out of school especially girls is also quite severe in the north. According to Sutherland Addy (2002) about 30% of girls at primary level compared to 19% of boys are not in school.

Severe malnutrition rates (e.g., over 50% of children are stunted in northern Ghana) and high infant mortality rates (25%) indicate the fragile nature of life for children in these social and economic environments (UNICEF, 2002). Studies on child poverty indicate that children are

² Based on the current exchange rate (December 10, 2002) this is approximately \$84 (US dollars).

³ GER for Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions based on 2000 census data is 61.6%, 56.4% and 70.3% respectively.

fending for themselves by carrying out their own economic activities to support their basic food and nutritional requirements (Casely-Hayford, 2002). The vast majority of children in northern Ghana are supplementing their family income through the provision of their labor to economic activities (e.g., farming or fishing), which makes participation in an education program a luxury. Underlying poverty factors and the growing parental neglect of children are vital factors when considering effective approaches for achieving universal basic education.

1.3 Meeting the goals of EFA and Ghana Poverty Reduction Framework

The Education for All objectives and Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy suggest that reaching children in rural deprived areas will demand innovative approaches, which take into account the harsh environment. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) recognizes this fact and declares that the Government will support over 100,000 children access alternative forms of education in deprived rural areas (Government of Ghana, 2002). The GPRS also recognizes that teachers, particularly trained teachers, are often unwilling to serve in rural deprived areas of the country which hinder the Ghana Education Service's ability to provide the necessary services (i.e. formal schools) in these areas (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001).⁴ Optimistic projections estimate that if the Government of Ghana was to provide 100% financing to the primary education sector it would take at least 10 years for the country to achieve universal basic education (Orivel, 2002). These estimates are based on the number of trained teachers in the system, high teacher attrition rates, and the low likelihood that demand will be met by the Teacher Training Colleges⁵. Additionally, the Ghana Education Service Performance Monitoring and Criterion Reference Testing indices suggest that the vast majority of children in the formal system, especially in rural deprived areas, are unable to achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills at the end of six years of primary schooling.

This evidence lends credibility to the argument that alternative complementary routes to achieving basic education in Ghana, particularly those that focus on educating girls and other underserved populations, need to be a high priority on the Government agenda.

⁴ Studies by Akyeampong (2002) indicate that the percentage of teachers in Ghana remain for a period of 4 to five years in the teaching profession after they complete teacher-training college and then move to other areas of administration or out of the system entirely.

⁵ The annual demand for teachers in Ghana reached 20,000 teachers while the supply from the training colleges was as low as 6,000 teachers in 2002. Access programmes are increasing this number gradually but the problems remain constant that the demand far outstrips the supply (Akyeampong, 2002)

2. Research Design

2.1 Research focus and objectives

In preparation for the development of their new education strategic objective (2004-2010) USAID/Ghana commissioned CARE International Ghana/Togo/Benin⁶ to investigate complementary education approaches that would help promote access to and increase quality of educational programs for under-served populations in Ghana, particularly those in the north of the country. The main research questions were:

1. What types of complementary education services have been effective in reaching the under-served, especially female, populations in rural deprived areas; and,
2. What complementary education mechanisms/processes have been the most successful and why?

Additional key research questions included:

1. What are some of the successful programs working in Ghana in terms of improving girls' educational programming in the northern region of the country?
2. What are the key complementary educational program mechanisms for addressing issues of access, quality and management in rural deprived areas in Ghana?
3. What is the environmental context (social, political and economic) that supports or challenges complementary educational delivery systems?
4. What agencies need to be in place to scale up these programs in terms of quality and capacity in Ghana (i.e. Civil Society, Government policy, etc.)?

A more expanded field guide was developed for the research teams who conducted the fieldwork⁷. These questions formed the basis for dialogue with the various target groups, beneficiaries and agencies involved in complementary education programming. The two case studies selected for in-depth study in northern Ghana were the School for Life program (SFL) and the Rural Education Volunteer (REV) Program; each had slightly different focus but a common objective: *to improve access to and quality of education for children in rural deprived areas*. SFL targeted children who were out of school due to several factors including: distance, poverty and lack of parental appreciation of formal education, whereas the REV program focused on improving the supply and performance of teachers in rural deprived communities since these areas were often unable to attract trained teachers. The REV program responded to this challenge by supplying young, often-new, senior secondary school graduates to rural deprived communities to serve as para-teachers while they re-sat their senior secondary school certification examinations to qualify for teacher training college.

Other issues the study team explored during the field research included: sustainability, scale, gender, and impact/effectiveness, program interface with District Assembly and District Education Offices, community participation, ownership and costs. Key sub-questions examined were:

⁶ CARE International in Ghana conducted the research in collaboration with Associates for Change and researchers from the University of Cape Coast (Institute of Education), the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana-Legon, and Ghana Education Service (Girls' Education Unit).

⁷ Annex 1 contains some of the key field research questions.

- How are civil society organizations (e.g. NGOs) cooperating with districts in improving educational access and quality (e.g. through joint planning at district level)?
- What phase out mechanisms had been put in place to ensure program sustainability and what challenges were anticipated in achieving this?
- What evidence was available concerning the impact and effectiveness of alternative education programs? The main indicators of impact used were enrolment, transition rates, quality (from interview evidence, on the spot assessment of pupils and PMT results), and gender equity.
- How cost effective are alternative education programs? On the basis of the costs what specific recommendations could be made about their value in complementing the efforts the government is making in providing basic education for all children?

2.2 Research method

The study used primarily a qualitative design (i.e., case study approach) that was supported by a documentary analysis and program profiling of selected alternative education programs around the world.⁸ Practical experience of international and indigenous NGOs brought a wealth of experience to the study of alternative approaches to education. This, combined with a literature review, provided a balance between in the field realities and academic theory/rigor. See Section 2 for alternative education profiles.

The research team surveyed the most successful alternative education models, which have achieved a level of scale and recognition within the international community, in order to draw lessons for Ghana. The projects were analyzed from a contextual perspective that focused on program objectives, the principles and modes of operation (impact and effectiveness). From this, project profiles (international, regional, and national) were developed.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

There were three key components to this research. Stage 1 focused on the development of alternative education profiling and documentary analysis to identify key themes, which were used to shape the field research questions. Stage 2 consisted of the field research (selected case studies) in northern Ghana to collect information and data on the alternative education programs that were considered large (in scale) and effective. Stage 3 was the analysis and synthesis of findings to determine the impact and effectiveness of alternative education programming, scale and relevancy, sustainability, and NGO/Government collaboration.

To ensure validity of qualitative data, information was collected from semi-structured interviews and triangulated with other data (e.g., material documents—policy briefs, observations, etc.) The impact and effectiveness of the programs reviewed were considered from several different angles. The impact of the alternative education project was analyzed from a child, community and professional educational perspective while indicators, such as Performance Monitoring and enrollment data, measured program effectiveness. During the data collection process, regular discussion and feedback between the researchers occurred in order to ensure both the reliability and validity of the data. The interdisciplinary nature of the team and the use of group discussions to reflect on key findings added value to the research project. After the data had been triangulated, it was cross-analyzed with the various members

⁸ It is important to note that time limitations for both the field research and literature review make it an exploratory research project. The team did apply measures of rigor to the data analysis to ensure that the emerging findings are valid and representative of the data collected.

of the team to verify each researcher's interpretation of the data before being synthesized into a preliminary report with recommendations.

2.4 Ghana field work methodology

In the 90's a number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) i.e., NGOs, in northern Ghana attempted to introduce alternative approaches to education aimed at improving access, quality and basic literacy attainment for children. Such alternative approaches were flexibly designed to meet the particular socio-cultural norms, values, and demographic characteristics of rural communities in northern Ghana. This made northern Ghana an important case study in terms of how Civil Society Organisations are succeeding in bringing basic education to communities, families and children who are unable to access the formal system of education.

The field research team focused on two programs considered successful for in-depth study. These are the *School for Life* (SFL) program—initiated by the Dagbon traditional council, Ghana Danish Communities Association (GDCA) and the Ghana Friendship Groups in Denmark (GV)—and the *Rural Education Volunteer* (REV) program initiated by Action Aid Ghana (AAG). Other subsidiary interventions were also examined such as the: Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Childscope (UNICEF), Youth Alive (Action Aid) program and the Local Language Initial Literacy Program (LILL) in relation to their impact in addressing challenges of out-of-school children.

The field research involved interviews and focus group discussions with project facilitators/providers, children and teachers (who were direct beneficiaries), District Education Staff (e.g., District Directors of Education, Girls' Education Officers, and Statistics officers), District Assembly staff (e.g. District Coordinating Directors, Planning and Finance officers). Others included head teachers, teachers and a cross-section of community members and leaders (i.e. Chiefs, Women leaders, SMC/PTA executives, youth representative etc).

Two districts were selected in each the Northern and Upper West Regions for analysis. School for Life programs in Savelugu-Nanton and Gushiegu-Karaga districts were selected for in-depth study in the Northern Region while the Rural Education Volunteer and Feeder School programs in Lawra and Sissala Districts were selected in the Upper West. Visits to the districts focused on gathering information regarding program activities, indicators of impact and effectiveness, and how these programs were perceived and valued by local education personnel (GES) and District Assemblies. At the district offices the study team sought information on performance monitoring tests (PMT) results in the schools and enrolment/retention data trends in the program and non-program schools.

A significant aspect of the fieldwork was the extensive 'debriefing' meetings with program providers; especially the SFL and REV project teams. The meetings were held to provide opportunity for feedback on emerging findings and interpretations (to allow for further probing and verification of evidence) and to discuss recommendations and challenges that the program providers had identified in the course of program implementation.

Although the main focus of the field research was on School for Life and Rural Education Volunteers programs, subsidiary programs were included in the fieldwork phase to provide additional insight into how other Civil Society Organisations complemented district educational efforts at improving educational access and quality. Particular interest was placed on how district education offices perceived the contribution of CSOs in achieving district education plans, and the steps that were taken to ensure that programs and activities initiated

by civil society organisations were sustainable in the long-term. Table 1 describes the main field research activities.

Table 1: Summary of Field Research Activities

Target Group	Persons Interviewed ⁹	Type of Programme	Dates	Area Visited
1. School for Life (SFL)	Program co-ordinator, Technical manager, Officers in charge of Education, financing and area co-ordinators, Facilitators, Community members and pupils	Literacy Program for children out of school	18/11/02; 19/11/02; 20/11/02; 23/11/02	Tamale; Savelugu-Nanton; Gusheigu-Karaga
2. Rural Education Volunteer (REV)	Action Aid program officer;	Providing teachers to teach in deprived rural areas	19/11/02; 25-26/11/02	Tamale, Upper West – Sisala, Lawra, Jirapa Lambrussie
3. Catholic Relief Service (CRS)	Program Officer	Education Support Program through food relief for schools in deprived rural areas	21/11/02	Tamale and several communities
4. Youth Alive Program	Director of Program	Program for placing street children in vocational training programs and teaching literacy/numeracy.	21/11/02	Tamale Program Office
5. ChildScope (UNICEF)	Education Desk Officer	Multifaceted program to improve literacy, increase attendance and continuation rates, especially for girls	22/11/02	Tamale
6. Feeder Schools	Teachers/pupils	Schools with mainly three classes (P1-P3) for very remote communities	26/11/02	Upper West, Sissala District
Governmental Groups				
5. District Education Office/ District Assembly	DEO, Planning Officer, Statistics Officer, Human Resource managing director, District Coordinating Director		19/11/02	Savelugu-Nanton
6. District Education Office	DEO, Planning Officer, Statistics Officer, District Coordinating Director		20/11/02	Gushiegu-Karaga
7. District Education Office and/District Assembly	DEO, Planning Officer, District Education Officers, Girls Education officer		27/11/02 28/11/02	Sissala District, Lawra District

⁹ See Annex 2 for a full list of those interviewed and their positions.

3. Findings from the International Study

3.1 Overview

The international survey revealed that the majority of complementary education systems and interventions working around the world are supported through the assistance of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) with varied input from national governments. The vast majority of these models have been developed through extensive field experience of the agencies involved and a long-term commitment to effecting change in the areas they serve. Key findings revealed several important themes; these include:

- 1) Socio-cultural context often determines the approaches best suited for supporting education;
- 2) Human resource capacity needs to be developed in a comprehensive and substantial manner within the local government structure and the Civil Society sector for effective delivery;
- 3) Gender equality is critical to ensure successful project implementation; and,
- 4) Community-based participation is essential for sustainability.

3.2 Complementary education programs contextual issues

Programs reflecting local cultural traditions, customs, and experiences that respect the positive practices, belief systems, and needs of community and integrating them into curriculum and teaching style have had the most success. There are three key elements that constitute an effective alternative education curriculum and instructional approach: 1) learner-driven and learner-focused, 2) flexible and culturally appropriate, and 3) skills oriented/competency-based. These factors allow for basic education programs to contain an accelerated learning program component, if desired.

Learner-driven and learner-focused: The context typically determines what the learner wants to and needs to learn in order to be a functioning member of the community as well as to foster community support and acceptance of the education program. One example of this is the use of both religious (e.g., study of Koran) and secular subjects (e.g., mathematics, social science) in the local school. In Afghanistan, religious and secular subjects are treated equitably and are studied together in community schools thus making the education program acceptable to both religious and local traditional leaders.

Instructional methods allow for peer tutoring and small group work. In India, the curriculum is self-paced. Learning takes place with teachers introducing new curricular item to the group at large and students working in small groups to complete the exercises. Peer tutoring, i.e. students who have already mastered the concept/skill assisting other students to learn the skills, allows for a self-paced (learner-driven) approach.

Flexible and culturally appropriate component: The curriculum is based on existing (country-specific) programs and materials that are outlined with input from local priorities (e.g., district plans) that target populations as well as appropriate flexible (seasonal) calendars and timetables. By including various local stakeholders in the process, the programs reflect local norms, needs and resources. For example, the determination of whether teachers should be drawn from the community or come from outside lies in an intimate understanding of how to foster cultural acceptance of education development. In India, community-based schools bring teachers from outside the local village to ensure there is equity (i.e., teacher from outside the local village is valuable as associations with caste are not forefront). However, in Afghanistan the teacher comes from within the community because they are a 'known'

quantity and understand village traditions and build teaching around traditional education systems/mores.

Skills-oriented/competency based component: Program design and content target specific competencies in literacy and numeracy, as well as general life skills such as problem solving and decision-making. In Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Mali, and Togo program design and content target specific competencies in literacy and numeracy that are immediately practical (e.g., the student learns how to write his/her name) and the teaching and learning materials reflect local language and culture, which facilitates learning by laying the foundation for activities that promote participation, exploration, and inquiry.

Accelerated Learning Approaches: Using learner focused and driven curriculum, which is adapted to the skills and competencies students need for the local environs, allows for accelerated learning to take place. For students, the amount of time they spend in school may be reduced because of this flexible curriculum and instructional approach. In Egypt and India, community school students are able to advance to various grade levels in a non-consecutive manner. During the summer months in Egypt a compressed curriculum for a school year is taught followed by an exam. If students pass they may move forward a grade level thus reducing their overall time in a community school. In India, once students have completed a level (module) they may move to the next level; students are able to complete more than one module in a year.

3.3 Human resource development

Another critical component of alternative education programs is the development of the human resource base in a comprehensive and substantial manner, i.e., school and community-based groups (PTAs, School Management Committees, Village Education Committees) need to have a strong collective human resource base. Building the broader capacity of community-based organizations to transfer them from a one-person organization to a collective social development effort is imperative as a lack of sufficient local capacity to make informed choices threatens long-term sustainability and effectiveness. Training should be applicable to a variety of areas. For example, in Afghanistan, Egypt, Mali, India and Togo community-level Parents Associations have their skills built (e.g., how to facilitate a meeting, take minutes, promote equitable decision-making) in a manner that is broad and can be transferred to other areas of their lives. Training is provided on an ongoing basis and mentoring visits are undertaken on a regular timely basis (at least one visit every month or two).

3.4 Gender equality

Involvement of women, formally or informally, in the school is essential as the majority of support attained to ensure implementation and student enrollment and retention comes from female input. In Egypt a ministerial decree states that mothers cannot be considered guardians of their children and their attendance at PTA meetings is not official. To promote the involvement of women, informal Women's Groups were started and females receive training in school related activities (e.g., how to conduct home visits to encourage student participation in the school) as well as attending trainings related to other women's issues that have a broader impact on their lives, e.g., women's rights, sex education, etc. In India, Mothers Groups allow women, who have little or no education, to be involved in the school by keeping the school grounds clean, encouraging children to attend on a regular basis, and to informally monitor the school (e.g., teacher attendance). In Togo, community female

monitors visit homes to discuss and advocate with parents to increase the girl-child study time in the home environment.

3.5 Community-based participation

One of the most important components of alternative education programming is the assumption that the primary responsibility for the provision of basic education facilities (both physical and social processes) rests on the part of communities. All of the alternative education programs examined demonstrated that community support (in-kind or direct contributions) is indispensable to increasing access and creating a quality-learning environment. Communities' mobilize their own resources—monetary, labor, manpower—in the provision, supervision and maintenance of their own facilities as well as taking an active role in the monitoring of the school for effectiveness and efficiency. Community participation revitalizes the pre-existing supervisory mechanisms on the part of the community and stresses a productive relationship between the community and the teacher/facilitator in the classroom, and isolation of the teacher at the village level.

3.6 Characteristics of complementary education systems

Complementary education systems provide structured programs of learning in a non-institutional environment; the programs are designed to eliminate both the defects and traditions of formal schooling. Many different forms of complementary education systems are derived principally from the village or community school concept as pioneered by the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC) schooling initiative (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2000).¹⁰ Many of these education initiatives have been evaluated as being effective in increasing access to under-served groups of hard-to-reach children, and improved achievement especially in literacy and numeracy. A number of factors have been identified as having contributed to the success of these programs (Hyde, 1999). They include the following:

1. School as an organic part of the community
2. Community involvement in school governance
3. Supervision and support to schools and teachers
4. Orientation of instruction (mother tongue instruction)
5. Teachers' qualifications
6. School organization
7. Partnerships and collaboration

School as an organic part of the community: In this context the community school grows out of the felt needs of the community as articulated by the community itself. It is demand-triggered and is largely unaffected by the level of deprivation of the community. Schools are established with donor assistance and in accordance with a "social contract" between the donor and the community. Schools are constructed using local materials to very modest standards and are maintained by the community. Local ownership and maintenance promotes access, equity and effectiveness (Hyde, 2002).

Community involvement in school governance: The evidence shows that the effective alternative schools are those that are governed by school management committees (SMC) or parent-teacher associations (PTA). These school level organizations manage budgets, sometimes select and pay teachers, oversee operations and monitor student enrolment and

¹⁰ BRAC non-formal programs are profiled in Section 2.

attendance. Parents tend to underwrite operating expenses with fees and levies (either in labor, kind or cash).

Supervision and support to schools and teachers: Effective alternative models have benefited from supervision and support that are provided through regular visits by animators (who play multiple roles as community development specialists and as facilitators in the schools) and their partner NGOs.

Orientation of instruction: Some alternative education models develop their own condensed curricula reflecting rural life, learning and teaching material and performance-monitoring instruments while others have depended on national government curriculum and materials. The curriculum generally covers only the essentials of reading and writing, calculation and some form of social studies. The reduced curriculum contributes to maintaining the performance of the children at acceptable levels, despite shorter school days and generally less qualified teachers (Hyde 2002).

An important consideration is the language of instruction. In many cases of successful alternative education, teaching for the first few years is done in a language that the children understand, usually the mother tongue (L1) while the foreign language is introduced gradually in later years.

Teachers' qualifications: Teaching is generally effective in the complementary systems; this is made so by recruiting teachers locally and training them to implement the program curricula. Usually such para-professionals are less well educated than their state "trained teacher" counterparts and in some cases may never have attended formal school themselves. Additionally, complementary systems often operate with locally engaged facilitators/teachers who are paid far less than the state schoolteachers but, often, show a high degree of motivation due to their new social status and commitment to community development. Typically they are given some cash income and the training provides them with the basic orientation to teaching and learning methods. Oftentimes they often live within the local community and are under careful community scrutiny and held accountable for any cases of negligence. Together with other community members, the teachers demonstrate a high level of social responsibility.

School organization: Innovative out-of school approaches have regulated enrolment and class sizes. The Save the Children (SCF) model in Mali for instance schedules pupil intake on a triennial basis with a maximum of sixty children per cohort. Other models take children on an annual basis and limiting class sizes to a manageable figure per teacher. The shift system is adopted to contain numbers beyond the stipulated class size. In a large number of cases, the approaches are based on a flexible calendar and schedule, established by parents. Where the schools follow the same calendar and hours of operation as the government-run schools, communities retain the option to change or adjust this to their own farming /seasonal demands.

Partnerships and collaboration: The literature clearly demonstrates that effective alternative models owe their levels of success to the building of strong partnerships among different stakeholders. Often the programs engage local NGOs to deliver support to a number of schools with the intent to extend coverage with the main actors in the implementation process being typically the Civil Society agencies and communities involved in the programs.

Government agencies usually assume the responsibility of supervision and the provision of additional financial support. In many cases, the Ministry of Education has helped in providing initial and follow up training as well as supervising instruction in the school. It has often administered standardized tests in alternative schools and provided teaching and learning materials as well as teachers and furniture/equipment. The Ministry provides the policy bridge between the complementary schools and formal school system in cases where beneficiaries of complementary education have continued to the formal systems therefore maximizing the value of non-traditional schooling opportunities.

International NGOs have played a facilitative role in helping communities to identify and source skills that they do not possess. They have also helped to transfer information within and between communities and school through NGOs sponsorship of monitoring and evaluation programs and support of pre-service and in-service training for teachers. This provided stimulus that may not otherwise be available given the constraints that state service provider's face in developing countries. Table 2 illustrates three main types of complementary (alternative) education programs that emerged from the study: community schools, community-based literacy/numeracy programs, and supplementary education programs for formal schools.

Table 2 Type of alternative/complementary education programs

Type of Program	Characteristics
<p>Community Schools Promote linkages to formal school system so students may transition to a higher level of education.</p> <p>Togo (PEP) India (Formal Equivalency Centers) Egypt (Small Schools) Afghanistan (Community-organized primary schools)</p>	<p>Community training in community-based participatory methodologies (Participatory Rural Appraisals), resource mobilization, school administration, and supervision of school personnel, decision-making, and conflict resolution is necessary to monitor and support the learning environment.</p> <p>Curriculum is equivalent to formal school basic curriculum; emphasis is on free pace of learning and children construction of knowledge by active participation, exploration, and inquiry.</p> <p>Pre-service and in-service teacher training focus on child-centered instructional approaches, effective classroom management, relevant teaching and learning material development, and multi-grade teaching techniques.</p> <p>Language of instruction is local language for first level(s) before changing to a non-local language (e.g., English) for medium of instruction.</p> <p>Students take national examination to determine admittance to formal school system.</p>
<p>Literacy/Numeracy Programs Promotes expansion of knowledge base with key skills, but does not necessarily promote transition to a formal learning environment.</p> <p>Ghana (School for Life) India (UDDAN)</p>	<p>Curriculum is child centered, (e.g., learn by doing) and relevant to local context, (e.g., incorporating practical examples) in their work. Language of instruction is in local language</p> <p>School calendar is shorter with flexible hours, usually 2-3 hours per day and allows for those who participate in farming, fishing, and other activities to attend classes. Programs typically follow seasonal calendar and timetable.</p> <p>Pre-service and in-service training provided to teachers/facilitators to ensure they have basic skills in supervision, instructional approaches, and implementing the curriculum. Teachers are usually from the local or neighboring community.</p> <p>Community-based participation includes providing space/land for the school, in-kind contribution (e.g., needs for roofing), direct financial support (to provide support for teachers' salaries or instructional materials) and training to build skill base.</p>
<p>Supplementary education programs to improve quality in formal system Systems and mechanisms that enhance/improve the effectiveness of the formal education system.</p> <p>Ghana (Rural Education Volunteers) Ghana (Basic Education and Civil Society) Kenya (Basic Education Fellows)</p>	<p>Curriculum and supplementary teaching materials usually provided in local language(s) and are simplified to promote direct learning of formal curriculum</p> <p>Basic education service providers (e.g., Civil Society Organizations) strengthened (institutionally and technically). The development of organizational capacity addresses the ability of grassroots organizations to manage their day-to-day operations. This entails the development of systems that ensure that an organization can effectively plan and implement projects, manage its personnel and finances, and be accountable to donors through reporting and evaluation mechanisms. Technical training focuses on providing training in areas that the CSOs need to be strengthened, for example if an organization is working the field of primary education teacher training may be needed.</p> <p>Civil Society Coalitions network CSOs to share ideas, lessons and resources to strengthen their ability to impact policy and practice through advocacy. In addition targeted research on key education issues and ongoing monitoring of Government expenditure and activities in the sector provides a check and balance system.</p>

4. Findings from the Ghana Study

4.1 Overview

This section will discuss the findings from the Ghana study related to complementary systems of education in the following areas:

1. Challenging contextual characteristics of the north which must be understood and taken into account when implementing education programs;
2. Barriers to accessing education include distance and population and a lack of engagement by communities and local institutions in the formal education system; and,
3. Opportunities for supporting change in the northern educational context are occurring through Civil Society support, and in some cases, local government (district) collaboration.

4.2 Context and characteristics of education in deprived rural areas¹¹

The Northern Region of Ghana account for almost a third of Ghana's landmark and is inhabited by about 10% of its population representing a population density of less than 25 people per square kilometer. Poverty is endemic in Northern Ghana with the people facing formidable challenges with regards to water, food livelihood, and employment opportunities. The community context with its severe lean season, low production and storage facilities contribute to the ongoing basic food security issues. With limited access to potable water and few economic opportunities younger generations, especially girls, have few chances to find productive work. As a result many are not able to remain in their home villages. A significant percentage of girl children—between the ages of 12-18 years—migrate from Savelugu and Gusheigu Districts in the north to urban areas to find employment and earn money for the dowry (e.g, provision of cloths, pots, etc.) in order to prepare for marriage. There are also significant challenges related to child fostering (girl children are given to an extended relative, usually an aunt, to be raised) and the poor perception of girls' education in the region which encourages parental preference for males to be educated due to the traditional roles of the girl child, inheritance lines, and security of parents in their latter years.

National statistics indicate that the literacy rate among adults is lower than 5% and less than 40% of children up to 14 years attend school. This leaves about 60% of the children out of school, majority of who are girls¹² thus the vast majority of children do not complete the compulsory nine years of primary schooling and consequently do not attain a basic level of literacy. In comparison to other regions, the Northern region also receives very little of the national education budget, approximately 4% of recurrent budget expenditure (GES Internal Budget Book, 2002).

¹¹ Northern Ghana includes the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions. The fieldwork was conducted in the Upper West and Northern regions because of location of case studies (chosen for their scaling and effectiveness).

¹² Data is from the Ghana Population Census 2000 and GES statistics Department, Regional Education Office.

The Upper West Region accounts for only 3% of the country's population with women constituting 52.1% and men 47.9%. The region is primarily rural with only 17.5% of the population of the region that can be classified as urban. Population density-per-square km is 31 persons as against the national figure of 79. With harsh climate and poor vegetation, the people are dispersed, nomadic and deprived. The Gross Admission Rate (GAR) of girls in the Upper West Region from 1996/97 to 1999/2000 academic years ranged from 60.3% to 74.6% while that of boys was 75.6% and 80.8% (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). This means for those years, between 25% and 40% of girls were not enrolled in school. For boys the figure is 19% to 24%.

A high proportion of children out of school also characterize the northern regions. As Table 3 demonstrates, with data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey and the Core Welfare Indicator Survey, in some districts more than one-third of the population of school going age are not attending, either due to limited or no access to any type of educational opportunity.

Table 3 Children out-of-school (6-11 years) (Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2000)

	Upper West Region	Upper East Region	Northern Region	Total in Ghana
% of boys out of school	40%	35.1%	32.8%	15.6%
% of girls out of school	26.8%	45.4%	42.7%	18.4%

The northern regions of Ghana suffer from an acute shortage of teachers in rural areas leading to a situation where many schools are simply not effective. Although the challenges of teaching in rural areas in Ghana are similar, the northern region presents a particularly difficult challenge for teachers, especially the newly trained teacher. Teachers often face problems of adequate accommodation¹³, unsafe drinking water, lack of electricity, poor health conditions, limited transport to neighboring towns to collect salaries, visit family, shop, etc, and lack of personal development opportunities (Action Aid REV program survey report, 2000).

Field research indicated that about 39% of children in Lawra district in the Upper West are out of school and about 40% of communities in the Sissala District are without schools. In Lawra district about 78% of the people can be classified as illiterate and only 5% of the over 11 year olds have ever been to primary school. Table 4 below reveals that percentage share of girls in school in all the districts in the Upper West region are lower than boys and continue to decrease as girls' transit from one level to the other.

¹³ Rural community housing require communal living arrangements that teachers unaccustomed to find especially difficult to adjust to.

Table 4 Percentage Girls' Enrolment in Primary by District: Upper West Region – 1996/97 – 2001/02 Academic Years

District	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Jirapa Lambussie	43.32	44.38	45.93	47.28	46.75	46.37
Lawra	46.51	47.09	47.83	48.93	50.20	50.97
Nadwoli	44.55	45.23	47.33	47.71	49.86	50.56
Sissala	51.24	50.68	52.10	53.10	50.07	55.33
Wa	42.65	43.68	44.14	43.73	43.78	44.55
Total Region	44.77	45.51	46.61	47.06	47.28	48.52

Source: District Education Office, Tumu.

One particular difficulty of providing education for children in the north is the nature of community settlements, which tends to be small, sparsely populated and widely scattered. Strict adherence to beliefs that formal education alienates children from their original culture has worked against efforts aimed at providing education for all children in the north. A weakness of the formal system of education is that it is a uniform model that is often incapable of the level of flexibility required to address the socio-economic and cultural survival needs of very deprived rural communities. All of these factors make the Northern Region a particular challenging place in terms of providing access and quality education through the formal education system.

4.3 Barriers to accessing education opportunities

Several key challenges emerged during the study of educational programming in the deprived rural areas in northern Ghana. These are:

1. Distance and small populations limits formal education opportunities;
2. Chronic teacher absenteeism and lack of commitment adversely affects the formal learning environment; and,
3. Minimal engagement by communities and local institutions limits the quality of the learning environment.

4.3.1 Access and distance to schools

As mentioned above, one of the major phenomena affecting education in northern Ghana are the sparsely populated communities that are scattered across the regions, which makes access to educational opportunities very challenging. Two key factors relate to these physical and geographic issues. These are:

- the ability of a community to sustain education over a period of time (i.e., population of 6-15 year olds and the growth rate in a community); and,
- distance of the community (population) to the nearest school.

The Core Welfare indicators report (1998) reveals that the Upper West and Upper East regions have the highest percentage of children walking over 30 minutes to school each day (34.9% children in the Upper West) and (32.6% in the Upper East). Reasons for not attending school in these regions suggest that costs of education, work performed in the family (parents need their children to work the lands, participate in trading, or other small economic ventures) and distance to school (children must walk 5-10 km or more to the nearest primary school and the nearest junior secondary school even a greater distance) constitute some of the principal reasons for non-attendance.

Two types of situations emerged from the study:

- Communities that do not have schools within 5 km of their locality, i.e., distance to school is primary determining factor with respect to attendance); and,
- Communities that have a school within 5 km¹⁴ but due to socio-economic, traditional factors, or poor quality formal schools, a significant portion of the population is out of school, i.e., access, quality, and socio-cultural plus economic factors contribute to create non-attendance.

4.3.2 Teacher absenteeism

Several of the districts visited in the north suggested that there were gaps in relation to community support and management of their schools. Focus group discussions with chiefs, and religious and traditional leaders indicated this was due, in part, to the lack of commitment and motivation many teachers displayed. The research team found, based on interviews and observation in several schools visited, trained teachers that were unmotivated and lackluster in their performance or absent from the school premises since they were either attending workshops or collecting salaries (sometimes for a full week).

In this context, the Rural Education Volunteer project is also introducing a new phenomenon—the presence of committed and motivated albeit essentially untrained teachers. However, REVs were being adversely affected by the presence of poor performing teachers. As a District Education official (in the Northern region) stated, "One is influenced by the culture of the school and the level of discipline of the head teacher". The research team noted that where there were poor head teachers, REVs also lost their motivation and their performance dropped significantly. Where head teachers had created a strong culture of discipline, the school performed well and REVs were present and performing well in the classroom.

A Teacher Training College Principal in the area participating in the research stated that at least half (50%) of the trainees in teacher training college were not interested in the teaching profession and did not demonstrate a desire to become a "committed teacher". At the same time some District Education Directors in the Northern Region were attempting to confront the high level of teacher absenteeism and crack down on the poor discipline among the teaching force by imposing sanctions. One District Director of Education made the pronouncement that the DEO would deduct a percentage of an absent teacher's salary every day he/she misses classes.

¹⁴ GES standards indicate there should be a school within walking distance of a village—5 km maximum.

4.3.3 Limited engagement of communities and local institutions

The lack of community understanding about their rights and what changes they were capable of making (e.g., holding teachers accountable for their attendance) was a major theme that permeated the study. Poor communities felt disempowered and helpless in the face of GES officers who were viewed as close colleagues of "trained teachers". Through interviews and observations, the *poor teaching culture* in the four research districts were also characterized by a *culture of fear*, i.e., communities were reticent in exposing high level of absenteeism and viewed the teachers as 'untouchable'. Communities felt they should not rock the boat by making complaints or reporting teachers who are not in the classroom for a significant amount of time. District Education officials in Sissala District stated that they felt there was collusion between the Circuit Supervisors and teachers (i.e., Circuit Supervisors were not monitoring or supervising the work) despite the free fuel that Action Aid was providing for their supervision and monitoring. Most communities were hesitant to report these teachers for fear that the GES would not post additional teachers to their communities thus forcing the school to be closed.

Poor community and school relationships existed with the school personnel (head teacher and teachers) controlling and managing the systems with little, if any, community support and/or input. For some of these communities, SMC/PTA workshops did not provide them with the skills and understanding of their rights and their share of ownership in school management that would allow them to constructively engage the education authorities to issue complaints and request disciplinary actions for the teachers.

4.4 Alternative routes to supporting basic education

The fieldwork also revealed a growing number of complementary approaches and initiatives to enhance access to and quality of basic education in the northern regions of the country. These include, among others, the Rural Education Volunteer (REV), School for Life (SFL) and Feeder School Program.¹⁵ As a response to the lack of teaching staff in the formal school system, volunteer teachers, who are often not as qualified as trained teachers but are from local environs, are becoming a new occurrence in the educational context of northern Ghana. Action Aid and some District Assemblies including Lawra, Jirapa Lamprussie and Sissala Districts are implementing this program. School for Life, a literacy and numeracy program for 8-15 years olds in eight districts in the Northern Region, works in rural deprived areas that have limited or no access to educational opportunities. School for Life has reached more than 50,000 learners and in some cases has provided the first contact communities have had to any education system.

4.4.1 Scale of programming

This section assesses the scale of the School for Life and REVS programs, which both demonstrated a relatively large level of scale and were reaching significant numbers of communities in the northern regions.

¹⁵ Alternative education profiles for the School for Life, Rural Education Volunteers, and Feeder School programs may be found in Section 2.

School for Life

SfL has covered about 25% of the communities (767 communities) in the districts it has worked in between 1995 to 2001. Within this period approximately 36,044 pupils have enrolled and approximately 2/3 of the graduates have been mainstreamed into the formal school system. Out of the total mainstreamed, about 41% were girls and 59% boys.

Table 5: SfL coverage in the Northern Region

Community	Total communities covered	Total communities in district	Percentage coverage by SfL (%)
Gusheigu-Karaga*	151	415	36.4
Nanumba	64	350	18.3
Saboba-Chereponi	76	408	18.6
Savelugu-Nanton*	97	350	27.7
Tamale (rural)	89	350	25.4
Tolon-Kumbungu	57	350	16.3
Yendi	128	316	40.5
Zabzugu-Tatale	105	350	30.0

Source: SfL statistical document 2001.

Rural Education Volunteers

The Rural Education Volunteer (REV) program was piloted in October 2000 in the Sissala District of the Upper West Region and later extended to Lawra, Jirapa Lambussie and Wa districts. The Sissala District Education Oversight Committee, GES, Action Aid Ghana and the Upper West Regional Development Program (UWRDP) undertook a joint community sensitization and animation process to alert communities of this new initiative. The first set of 20 Rural Education Volunteers (REVs) were appointed and posted to 14 deprived schools in the district. Twenty more were appointed in October 2001, bringing the total to 40 (24 males/16 females) who are teaching in 26 schools and handling 70 classes.

Overall the Upper West Region Development Program now has 250 REVs (183 females/67 males) with an emphasis on recruiting female teachers in these areas in order to improve the climate for girls' education in the schools. The following table (6) disaggregates REVs by gender and district.

Table 6: Percentages of Female REVS by District in the Upper West

District	Number of REVs			Percentage Female
	Total	Female	Male	
UWRDP*	250	183	67	73.2%
Sissala	60	43	17	71.7%
Jirapa - Lambussie	50	43	17	96%
Lawra	100	55	45	55%
Wa	40	37	3	92.5%

* Upper West Regional Development Program

4.4.2 Access and retention

The percentage of learners who are enrolled in an education program reflects the household's perception of the importance of student participation in education and the availability, quality and relevance of affordable education services. While the percentage of students who continue on to a higher level of education reflects the household's commitment of the need to gain more detailed knowledge that in turns contributes to the sustainable development of the country. Table 7 provides qualitative data on access and retention.

Table 7: Access and Retention

Program	Access and Retention rates
School for Life	➤ Access and retention rates in the districts with SFL programs have improved significantly; over 80% of School for Life graduates have continued onto the formal school system (primary, junior and senior secondary levels)
Rural Education Volunteers	➤ Enrolment data from the districts indicates that the REV program has stabilized and in some cases improved the enrolment rates in the schools since teachers are seen as being more committed to their responsibilities at the school. Community members commented that teachers' commitment was measured by their willingness to live in a rural community and be part of the community, which parents felt helped improve retention rates in the school.

District enrolment data in Savelugu and Gusheigu Karaga Districts indicated a significant increase in enrolment in formal schools within the School for Life catchment areas with many of the SfL graduates entering the formal system, usually at primary 4 levels. The main issue remains the lack of access for SfL graduates (approximately 11,000) to the formal education system either at the primary or secondary levels due to lack of funding, lack of schools in close proximity and other educational barriers. Table 8 provides a further breakdown of SfL statistics.

Table 8: Data on SfL learners 1995-2001 (30 districts)

	Male	Female	Total
Initial enrollment in SFL	21,346	14, 698	36,044
Graduated from SfL	19,778	13,344	33,122
Dropped-out of SfL	1,345	1,805	3,150
# Transitioning to formal schools	12,996	9,094	22,090

In Gushiegu-Karaga District, SfL officials provided enrolment statistics and transition rates up to senior secondary level that showed how effective the SfL program is in promoting graduates to continue with their schooling where opportunities exist. Table 9

demonstrates the number of SfL graduates who transitioned to the formal system: primary, junior and senior secondary where educational opportunities are available.

Table 9: SfL graduate transition rate into formal system in Gushiegu-Karaga District (1995-2001)

Transition rates	Total
Graduated from SfL	7, 592
SfL graduates transition to primary	1,023
SfL graduates transition to JSS*	244
SfL graduates transition to SSS*	108
Transition to Community Schools	128

* Upon completion of formal school level

Rural Education Volunteer Program

Field research in the REV program indicates that parents are very happy to see volunteer teachers in schools in their communities and this has encouraged them to send their children to school. In some districts the majority of REVs are also female (e.g., in Wa district over 90% of the REVs are females) which sends an important message about the benefits of educating the girl-child and reducing parents fears of sexual abuse. Interviews with District Education Offices indicate that without the REV program, children in remote schools such as Nyimeti, Bullu, Basissan, Banu and many other rural communities in the Upper West would not have had teachers in their classrooms and thus many children would have been forced to drop-out of the system.

The field team found that the policy of REVs residing in the communities they serve has a significant impact on their ability to create a safe, effective learning environment for school children. Interviews with parents indicated that children are able to congregate at the homes of REVs in the evenings thus providing the children with the opportunity for extra classes and assistance from the teachers. REVs and parents indicated this was found to have a significant impact on their ability to learn.

Parents in the study sites were increasingly committed to sending their wards to school, especially the girl-child, because of a sense of confidence in the teaching and learning process due to the regular presence of a teacher in the classroom. The scheme has helped to improve enrolment in the communities because the REVs are seen as role models from whom both parents and pupils derive inspiration. For example, enrolment in Bechemboi primary school in the Upper West increased from 91 to 116 and Wuru from 25 to 75 between 2000/01 and 2001/02 academic years when REV's were placed in these schools. The enrolment within classes has also stabilized over the same period. In most communities, like Wuru, the REV may be the only literate person(s) in the communities often acting as community facilitators and secretaries on community committees.

4.4.3 Quality

There are various factors that influence quality; these include, but are not limited to: associated costs (e.g., uniforms), instructional approach, teaching and learning materials availability, relevant curriculum, and suitable school calendars. These issues were examined and the results listed below.

School for Life

A significant difference between SfL and the formal school system is that SfL provides all teaching and learning materials required for each school child and does not require formal uniforms to be worn by pupils therefore reducing the cost it takes to equip a learner to attend school. The SfL program explains to parents/communities during their animation activities that classes will be organised at a time suitable to the communities in order that pupils are available to help their parents on the farms and in carrying out household chores. The SFL school term runs from October to June, (9-month cycle) which is the dry season and avoids interfering with the major farming season when children are required to offer labour in the farms.

The textbook to pupil ratio in SFL schools is 1:1. Instruction is sequential with emphasis on the phonetic approach to language learning. During the fieldwork the study team randomly tested some SfL pupils who were asked to read English readers. Pupils performed creditably in the random tests and pupils used the same phonetic reading approach acquired through SFL instruction to pronounce English words. The study team found SFL instructional approach to be very participatory, interactive and child-centred (in the sense that the facilitators used question and answer teaching techniques consistently).

Rural Education Volunteers

The REV program targets SSS graduates with at least two, preferably three, passes including Mathematics and English. A panel made up of officials from GES, Action Aid, and the District Assembly interview short-listed applicants with selection criteria emphasizing articulation, comportment, and willingness to live and work in a remote deprived community. In assessing willingness to live and work in a remote deprived community attention is given to whether the potential REV has or is living in communities similar to those they are likely to serve once they are employed. Preference is given to female candidates over male candidates to create opportunities for female role models and encourage more girls to attend school. Observations in the communities by the study team indicated that the selection process and criteria for REV's has a significant impact on their commitment to teaching in rural deprived areas.

REVs are put through 1-2 week's pre-service training, with GES and District Assembly involvement, immediately after they are hired. Within this period they are given training in how to, (i) prepare lesson notes, and teaching and learning materials, (ii) present lessons and (iii) general information about teaching as a profession. Follow up training and access courses are provided during vacations to focus their skills and prepare them to re-write their SSSCE papers. Training is designed to improve the quality of teaching

skills as well as making room for experience to be shared from rural teachers, NGOs etc. The DA's and AAG jointly meet the cost of maintaining REV's.

While there are signs that teaching and learning is improving in the REV communities, which is measured against the background of the pupil's ability to speak, read and write in English, the approaches and techniques employed are those prevalent through the formal education system. Observations of classroom teaching revealed that REVS mostly applied a teacher-centered approach opposed to a child-centered approach in their instructional practice and the use of teaching and learning materials was minimal or absent in some cases. Also, REVS mostly used the English language to explain basic concepts for lower primary pupils and the study team observed that this posed problems for children's' reading comprehension in the upper primary years. This situation stood in sharp contrast to the SfL facilitators who had been trained in the use of the local language and were using it as the initial language of instruction in order for children to attain basic literacy.

The research team also noticed that some REV's lacked sound pedagogical training in the area of classroom discipline, e.g. the reliance on the cane in the instructional process. This suggests that REVS need continual and consistent support in their classroom practice, a task for circuit supervisors and school heads.

4.4.4 Achievement and performance

Achievement and performance effectiveness were based on focus group discussions, results of the Performance Monitoring Tests conducted by district officials over the last three years and teachers' observations of SFL and non-SFL pupils and interviews with SFL pupils.

School for Life

Teachers in Savelugu District where there are a significant number of SFL students transitioning to the formal public school system indicated that SFL students were able to transfer their literacy skills in the local language into the English language and were often performing much better than the children who have had exposure only to the formal school system. A district official interviewed pointed out that both parents and some Education officials in the communities in which SfL had been in operation were recommending "all pupils attend SfL before they entered the formal school system". District Education officers in Savelugu District confirmed that the SLF program had made a significant impact on improving the PMT results.

The SfL evaluation report (2001) indicated that in about 9 months of teaching, random testing of pupils showed that:

- 1/3 of pupils could read very well and write on their own
- 1/3 of pupils could read fairly well and could write a few words
- 1/3 could read with difficulty. (School for Life, 2001)

Rural Education Volunteers

School visits and classroom observation of REV's reveals that there is a tremendous opportunity for the REV's to help support the teaching and learning process in the school if given the proper training particularly with respect to instructional approaches.

Community members confirmed that REV's were providing students with extra lessons after school and in the evenings (at no cost). The program has not been in existence long enough to confirm the impact that the REV programs is having on the performance and achievement levels of children.

Apart from the preliminary qualitative evidence that access, retention, and achievement levels were improved by these complementary education projects, they are also building the capacities of rural youth (e.g., SFL facilitators) to find gainful employment in the education sector. The REV program has hired more than 250 rural youth, mainly females, to act as volunteer teachers while providing them with an opportunity to improve their examination grades (from the senior secondary level) to enter Teacher Training Colleges.

4.4.5 Community and district stakeholder participation

The research team examined the role the communities play, what contributions they made, and their interactions with the local education authorities.

School for Life

SfL attempts to make the community more responsible for managing their own educational program and as such requires that communities nominate a volunteer facilitator who is resident in the community, provide some cash, foodstuffs or labour for the facilitator, and sets up a five member committee for ensuring that the facilitator is supported. Although SfL works in very poor communities it still expects some amount of support that has clearly cost implications for the communities concerned. Evidence from the field indicates that community participation in the SfL programme is high on the following: (i) land provisions and site selection, (ii) teachers' selection and firing, (iii) and scheduling of time table. However, it is low on monitoring attendance and medium on labour and raw materials for setting up the schools.

As indicated earlier, some SfL graduates are unable to find formal schools nearby to attend after graduating from the program. In response to this problem some communities have set up their own schools after the programs end (i.e. complete their full cycle). A good example was observed at Gushiegu-Karaga district where 16 communities have established schools after SfL programs have run their full course and phased out. These communities are more aware of the value of education and determined to ensure that their children have further access to basic education and have initiated action to have formal schools in their communities or nearby. To date, SfL has also assisted over 90 communities construct their own schools after the cycle ends.

Community participation in REV

Community involvement in the REV program is paramount and high. The community provides accommodation for the REV who is from a different community, foodstuffs and land to farm on. During the recruitment process the number of subjects a REV needs to

re-sit is established, and the time for re-sitting the examination. Based on this information, UWRDP do the following:

- Supply relevant textbooks and Pupils' Guides for those subjects;
- Organize appropriate courses/holiday classes at a secondary school or training college during vacation;
- Support REV's financially to register for their examinations.

GES provides REV's with teaching/learning materials and organizes practical in-service training for them and other teachers from rural schools. Action Aid Ghana provides solar lights, where necessary, for self-study and lesson preparation and also bicycles for mobility.

The study team found that communities were responding positively to the REV program by sending their children to school and in some cases pooling resources to support the construction of school buildings, teachers housing, providing furniture and other teaching and learning materials. Unlike the SfL program where the district involvement seems minimal at least at the planning stages of the program, the REV program appears to be a good example of close collaborative efforts between civil society and local education authorities. The partnership comes with some challenges but at the same time it offers the opportunities for all key stakeholders to participate in the management, monitoring and supervision of the program. Roles have been delimited and coordination appears to work reasonably well.

4.5 Program sustainability and cost effectiveness

Some of the District Assemblies and Education Offices have also recognized the quality of the programming and have provided financial support to ensure their continued implementation. Table 10 reveals the financial commitment by some of the districts involved in the School for Life and Rural Education Volunteer programs.

Table 10 Districts financial commitment

Northern Region	
Savelugu District	The Rural Education Volunteer (REV) project is currently being supported through the World Vision program. The District Assembly is considering support to the School for Life project.
Gushiegu Karagar District	With donor support decreasing, the district is actively discussing financing SFL literacy and numeracy classes.
Upper West Region	
Sissala District	The District is supporting 50% of the costs of the REV project.
Lawra District	The District is supporting 100 REV's. The REV project showed particular impact in this district; over 400 applications were received by Lawra District Education Office to fill 100 positions.
Jirapa Lamprussie District	The District is supporting 50% of the costs of the REV project, which includes payment of teacher's salaries, examination fees, bicycles and solar lanterns.

School for Life

The largest expenditure for SfL programs is in supervision costs followed by textbooks, other operating costs, and ongoing staff training. Teacher salaries (costs) are the lowest (\$2.30), which is less than a tenth of the teacher cost per pupil in the formal system.

Enhanced learning outcomes of SfL students can be attributed in part to the emphasis the program places on educational inputs (i.e. supervision, textbooks, and teacher training), which are known to have direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Lockheed & Vespoor, 1991). Even after taking into account the lower student teacher ratios (25:1), the unit cost for teaching is considerably less than what it costs to train¹⁶ and pay a trained teacher.

Given that SfL pupils enter the basic school system and are able to make appreciable gains in literacy and numeracy skills coupled with better internal efficiency, the implication is that the SfL approach has an appreciable better cost-benefit ratio than the state primary school system. Table 11 reviews the basic costs provided by the program on a per child basis. However, the total operating unit cost is about \$31¹⁷; not a very significant difference when compared to the GES total unit cost (recurrent) of about \$39 (Orivel 2002).

Table 11: Profile of costs in cedis for SfL program

1. Operational Costs	Amount in Cedis
• Teacher salaries per student	19,600
• Textbooks per student	55,000
• Other learning materials per student	25,000
• Supervision	86,000
• Continuous staff training costs per student	30,800
• Other operating cost per student	50,000
• Total Operating Unit Cost	266,400.
2. Capital and start-up costs	
• Initial training costs per teacher	420,000,00
• Furniture and facilities per classroom	1,306,000
• Building construction per structure ¹⁸	45,540,000

Operational costs for Rural Education Volunteer

Using data from 12 teacher-training colleges in Ghana, Akyeampong, Furlong & Lewin (2000) calculated that the average college cost per trainee is about US\$680 per student. In the three-year duration of training to become a teacher this amounts to about \$2,100 of which a significant portion goes toward stipends. In fact training colleges utilize only a part of the time allocated and budgeted for in college training (Akyeampong 1997). Given that many trained teachers do not wish to teach at the primary level, especially if

¹⁶ Recurrent public cost of a trained teacher is estimated at \$2100 (Akyeampong 2001)

¹⁷ Using current rate of C8500 = \$1.00

¹⁸ SfL pays 85% of costs whilst community provides 15%.

such schools are located in rural areas (Akyeampong 2001; Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001), the return to investment in formal training is low. Given the many challenges and the low return in the investment in the formal teacher education system there is a need for alternative approaches to training that is demand driven and more cost effective. The REV program falls within these parameters particularly as it focuses on providing young energetic teachers for rural deprived communities.

An analysis of the costs of training a REV teacher gives a good indication of its value as compared with the costs of training a basic schoolteacher. Table 12 breaks out REV costs.

Table 12: Costs for training REVS 2002/2003¹⁹

Inputs	TOTAL IN CEDIS (C)
Salary	168,000,000
Textbooks for REVs	48,586,000
Supervision –fuel for circuit supervisors (2 gallons a week)	13,867,200
Staff training	44,024,000
Other costs:	
Bicycles	60,500,000
SSSCE registration	32,620,000
Solar lamp/lantern	51,440,000
Overall total	419,037,200
Overall unit costs	3,809,429

The cost per REV student is approximately \$448²⁰, which is about 1/5 of the cost of training a teacher in the Teacher Training College. Approximately 40% of the REV costs are in salaries whereas in the formal training of the basic schoolteacher about 75% of direct costs are in student stipends (Akyeampong 2001). About 19% of the REV program cost is direct investment in improving the chances of REV teachers to enter Teacher Training Colleges, polytechnics or universities.

4.6 Program challenges

While there are many positive impacts and characteristics associated with complementary education in the northern sector of Ghana there are also some significant challenges. The following paragraphs review SfL and REV program challenges; the Feeder School Program will be addressed separately.

School for Life

The SfL program was making a significant impact in terms of improving access to formal education and improving the chances of children progressing to higher levels in the formal education system. However, the most pressing challenge facing this program is *the inability of SfL graduates to access the formal system or any other education program*

¹⁹ Based on Capital and Recurrent cost estimates in two districts in the Upper West supporting 110 REV's.

²⁰ Based on current exchange rate of 8500 = \$1

after graduation. SfL officials also pointed out that many pupils who were unable to mainstream into the formal school system felt disappointed and disillusioned. Others were able to join formal schools sometimes dropped out because parents were unable to pay the fees or provide school uniforms. The SfL program demonstrates how once an individual receives a basic education, he/she usually wishes to continue to build this knowledge base. This represents the need for more approaches to transition students to higher levels of education and closer collaboration with local education authorities to ensure that children are not abandoned once they complete alternative education programmes.²¹

Rural Education Volunteers Challenges

While REV teachers provided a much needed service to keep classrooms and schools operational, many of the teachers lacked adequate supervision although Action Aid was paying GES circuit supervisors fuel allowances to carry out intensive monitoring of the program. Some individuals indicated that the problem stems from the lack of effective means of transport while other individuals informed the study team that even when GES circuit supervisors had transport some were not conducting regular supervision of REV teachers. SfL school supervisors had, in contrast, developed a culture of professional support for their facilitators that could be traced to the values inculcated during their professional training and deep commitment to the ideals of the program. On the other hand, GES circuit supervisors appear to see their participation in the REV program as an added responsibility and were therefore less committed to the task.

REVs had similar aspirations as newly trained teachers who were keenly aspiring to higher education and were therefore less likely to show the level of commitment found among the SfL facilitators who had less qualifications and saw the opportunity to teach as service to the community of which they were an integral part.

Feeder School Program Challenges

The Feeder Schools program is designed to overcome some of the barriers to education in rural areas including: children's access to schools long distances from their homes, remoteness of some communities and inability to provide schools in all villages particularly where there is a low population density. This concept started in the 2000-2001 academic year when smaller communities in the Sissala District began requesting schools and the District Assembly realized that it could not build full (primary 1-6) schools in each of these communities.

According to the Sissala District Education Officer, children from about 20% of communities walk more than 5km to school and approximately 10% of the settlements do not meet the strict GES criteria for setting up a school, i.e., the community population is too small to meet the required Ghana Education Service policy (Pupil: Teacher Ratio of 1:30) for a school. Against this background, stakeholders and partners (AAG, SDA,

²¹ Unfortunately about 6089 SfL pupils were unable to find formal schools nearby to attend.

GES, and communities) initiated action to develop schools with three classrooms (P1 - P3) with a concept comparable to the School for Life program.²²

The original idea was the provision of a flexible non-formal primary education for children that avoided the rigidities of the formal system. This meant that children were not expected to use school uniforms, school/academic calendars would meet community needs and the curriculum would be culturally relevant.

The research team noted during its fieldwork that the only feature of the feeder school system retained, as originally intended, is its nearness to the children's community. As Table 13 shows 453 children (P1&P2), in the seven communities in Sissala District participating in the program are now able to access education opportunities. However, analysis of transition rates from P1 to P2 reveals a high dropout rates. Teachers and community members explained that a contributing factor is migration for economic purposes due to the nomadic/semi-nomadic nature of the communities.

Table 13: Enrolment in Feeder Schools 2000/01 and 2001/2002 Academic Years

Community	2000/01			2001/02		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Dimanjan I&II	17	19	36	43	23	57
Konchorgu	25	22	47	21	19	40
Basissan	23	21	44	34	23	57
Duwie	36	38	74	39	37	76
Wasai	19	26	45	32	39	71
Konkorgu	33	27	60	46	48	94
Pina	-	-	-	31	22	53
Total	153	153	306	221	232	453

Source: Based on data supplied by Action Aid Ghana (AAG), Sissala District.

Other features of the program have been compromised since Action Aid has ceded implementation and management of the Feeder Schools to the GES who have posted trained teachers, and in some cases REV's, to these schools. The system has assumed much of the characteristics of the formal basic school system including a calendar that follows GES time frame (which does not meet the seasonal needs of the communities and the use of the GES primary school curriculum) and weak management and supervision that limits the efficiency of the system.

The study team felt that the Feeder Schools would have benefited from the approach adopted by the SfL model especially its curriculum orientation and programming (use of mother tongue as medium of instruction) as it is more reflective of the rural context and addresses the program needs more adequately. Parents in some communities also expressed reluctance in sending their children to schools in other communities to

²² The assumption is that at primary 4 children will be physically and socially mature enough to walk the distance to the nearest school to attend upper primary levels.

continue their education due to loss of confidence (with the construction of their community-assisted school) and high costs of sending children to schools that were far away.

However, the real threat to Feeder Schools appears to be the limited number of school age children in host communities. New schools in sparsely populated communities tend to suffer enrolment dry-out over a number of years. The average population of the Feeder school communities in the Sissala District is 200 persons. Assuming that 15% of this is made up of children of school age, enrolment will be completed in less than 5 years thus making the school no longer feasible.

4.7 Other complementary interventions

In addition to REV and SFL, there are other complementary education programs that are being implemented through international and national NGOs. Other interventions reviewed include:

- Community Schools: Feeder Schools sponsored by Action Aid.
- Literacy/Numeracy programs: School for Life; Out-of-School Vocational and Literacy program by the Ghana Danish Community Program, Enlightening the Hearts Literacy Campaign by the Olinga Foundation, Local Language Initial Literacy, and Youth Alive program for street children supported by Action Aid.
- Supplementary education programs to improve quality in the formal school: Girl-Child education programs conducted by World University Service of Canada; school Lunch and take home rations by World Food Program and Catholic Relief Services; and Rural Education Volunteers funded by Action Aid.

Many of these complementary educational programs have common characteristics, which include:

- Flexible school calendars adopted to the local seasonal calendar and needs of the community (timing of the school, degree of investment of parents);
- Locally recruited school teachers/facilitators;
- Motivated individuals (communities) committed to the education process;
- Flexible curriculum that emphasizes use of local language and key competencies (in literacy and numeracy);
- Low cost structures that keep costs to a minimum (e.g., no school uniforms, school structures are locally made or in an existing structures); and,
- Clear exit strategies to ensure mainstreaming efforts and phasing out programs conducted in collaboration with District Assemblies.

Table 14 Complementary education approaches

Type of Program	Agency	Description of program	Impact
School Lunches	Catholic Relief Services	Provision of school feeding program for lunch (both boys and girls from P1 to P6).	? Interviews with community and districts holders reveal that children are often saving the food to take home to help feed other siblings. ? Districts see food interventions as one of the most important programs for improving access and

Type of Program	Agency	Description of program	Impact
			retention, particularly of girls in the district. ? Significant impact on enrolment of girls, particularly at the early years (6-10 years of age) ? Retention is harder to sustain at the upper primary when families see girls as more productive and valuable to engage in labor activities e.g., trading or Kayayo (girls who are performing services such as carrying goods at the market places)
Dry Ration for Girls Take home rations for families sending girls	World Food Program	Dry ration provision for girls at the JSS level who are able to attain an 85% attendance rate	? Significant impact on increasing enrolment and retention in the upper regions (Based WFP evaluations) ? Strategies to phase out the program over the coming five years. Program does not have a clear exit strategy for how stakeholders will take it over or supplement food.
Bicycles for Girls	UNICEF	Appropriate transportation technology Provision of bicycles for needy girls	? Some girls are able to attend school in near by towns particularly at JSS level, thereby helping to improve transition rates to junior secondary levels. ? Girls' Education officers report that girls are tired and often still constrained by household chores after school and therefore recommend boarding for girls in some areas in addition to provision of bicycles.
Community Awareness and Capacity Building	World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	PRA and income generation for women	? Conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal programs in selected community schools helps to increase the level of community ownership and accountability of the teachers in the school. ? Providing savings and credit schemes provided opportunities for women to support the girls in school.
ChildScope	UNICEF	Participatory rural	? Awareness of and access to education programs significantly increased (growth in enrolments in Childscope districts was higher than national growth in enrolment- J Osei, 2002) ? Parents provide children with breakfast at home; result of school/community sensitization programs. ? Parents aware of the need to equity between boys and girls for household chores. ? Provision of water receptacles have been started in some of the schools. Water tanks bring in clear water. This helps to improve the overall health and hygiene environment and helps to increase girls' retention, especially in the upper grade levels.
Water points (bore holes)	Christian Children fund of Canada and World Vision	Creating sanitation points for girls and boys	? Improves health and sanitation problems ? Reduces time spent on water collection ? Increases contact hours for girls, retention and achievement particularly for adolescent girls.
Scholarships	Cambridge Education Fund for Girls (CAMFED) And District girls Education	Scholarship programs for girls in upper primary and JSS. 250,000 per year. Scholarships usually provided in form of	? Higher retention rates, particularly at the upper primary level, have been noted among girls participating in the scheme. ? There are fewer direct costs for parents to send girl child to school; stabilizes their income base.

Type of Program	Agency	Description of program	Impact
	Offices MURAG	materials (uniforms, schools bags, sandals, books, etc.)	
Street children's' program Vocational program with literacy and numeracy	Action Aid	Assisting children who are on the streets of Tamale and would like to receive an education. The Youth Alive program provides a literacy/numeracy program in the mornings, and counsels to youth to identify vocational training options often in the informal sector through apprenticeships.	? Interviews with the Director reveals the program is having an initial impact. More than 50 youth have graduated as trained apprentices in various vocations. Some of the youth have been given tools and started their own businesses. The program has had an impact on building self-esteem, particularly among girls who are skilled enough to manage their own businesses.

4.8 Conclusions

- (i) *Distance to school:* small sized sparsely populated areas present a big challenge in terms of developing alternative education systems that can serve all communities.
- (ii) *Local language:* Local language usage was found to be critical to the success in achieving basic literacy in a large proportion of the populations targeted by complementary educational programming. It was also observed that teachers in the formal system, particularly primary levels one to three, are in great need of more simplified approaches to teaching basic literacy in the local language in order to assist children achieve literacy in the second language (Goody, 2001). The SfL model (using locally recruited and trained facilitators) demonstrates that pupils who are taught using mother tongue can make the transition to the regular school system with very little difficulty.
- (iii) *Management and Supervision* – The study revealed that a major strength of the complementary education systems is the strong management and supervision that focuses often on supporting facilitators (teachers) at the school level to deliver quality instruction. The regular in-service that was organized to reinforce new skills and address problems encountered in teaching served to improve instruction quality.
- (iv) *Role of Local Government Agencies* –The study revealed that there are practical difficulties in forging closer partnerships between Civil Society Organizations and local education authorities with the main problem being the layers of bureaucracy upon which the latter operates. There is also some suspicion over motives and the psychological distance created as a result of the better conditions of service of NGO personnel. Yet, the study revealed that it was critical that early on in

program formulation and planning there is dialogue between CSOs and local authorities that clearly explains the various roles and responsibilities and the system of accountability that will ensure that goals are met in the short and long term. The study team found that complementary education programming requires a high level of civil society involvement to ensure quality in programming.

- (v) *Sharing experiences (systemic advocacy)*: There are limited mechanisms in place that allow CSOs to share their experiences and make known their successes to the appropriate Government personnel who can influence local and national policy on alternative education programs. For example, the study team found very compelling evidence from the School for Life program about the use of mother tongue in teaching to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills. And yet, the feeder school program initiated by Action Aid Ghana (AAG) had not tapped into this powerful methodology to improve teaching skills of its volunteers. This raises the issue of identifying relevant stakeholders who may already possess effective strategies to address problems/challenges faced by some civil society organizations attempting to improve educational access and quality in rural deprived communities.

5. The Way Forward

5.1 Key lessons

"Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people, and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living." (EFA, 2000).

While quality and access are both important to long-term development, quality affects access and the willingness of the household to make financial and other sacrifices to send a child to school. The findings from the research points to the fact that improving access and quality of education programs through complementary activities is multi-dimensional and takes collaboration between the local government structure (district authorities) and Civil Society sector.

The national and international study revealed several key findings, which have been put into recommendations for future USAID strategic education programming. These are:

1. **Integrating contextual understanding into programming:** An intimate understanding of the context, and barriers to accessing quality education opportunities are the underlying factors in the implementation of successful complementary education programs. Key components of complementary education programming are identified and potential programming options listed in Recommendation 1.
2. **Improving Civil Society capacity:** The majority of complementary programs are implemented by Civil Society Organizations because of their commitment and access to underserved populations. In order to enhance Civil Society's capacity to be an effective education service provider, it is important to build Civil Society Organizations institutional and technical capacity. Professional CSOs may also provide services to strengthen local authorities capacity. Strategies for building the Civil Society resource base are listed in Recommendation 2.
3. **Mobilizing broad-based constituencies to advocate:** Communities have limited understanding of their rights and how to engage productively with power structures (e.g., district authorities). It is critical that communities are made aware of their rights and how their 'voices' and concerns may be channeled upward. Strategies for the enhancement of mechanisms to promote grass-roots advocacy are listed in Recommendation 3.
4. **Increasing district capacity to engage with Civil Society:** The Civil Society sector and local authorities have engaged in productive collaborations to sustain financial and programmatic commitments to alternative education programs. This work, especially in the areas of planning and monitoring, needs to be continued. Recommendation 4 elaborates upon this strategic option.

5.2 Key Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendation 1—*Increase access to, and quality of complementary, education programs for underserved populations*

The international and national research has yielded common elements that are critical to ensure successful implementation of complementary education for under-served populations. These elements include: 1) understanding of the local context; 2) flexible school calendar and timetable; 3) skill-based curriculum using the local language as medium of instruction; and 4) community-based participation in the learning environment. The complementary education programs that are working effectively in rural areas in Ghana include, among others, Rural Education Volunteers, School for Life, The Olinga Foundation literacy project, WUSC-funded Girl-Child Project, and CARE's Basic Education and Civil Society project. They have some, or all, of the following components as the underlying foundation of their program.

- Contextual understanding and relevance: Distance, small populations, and a strong traditional cultural base that promotes early marriage and foster daughters are crucial elements to understand and take into consideration when designing and implementing complementary interventions especially in rural areas. A demonstrated understanding of the local context by the implementing agency also fosters community confidence and acceptance of the education program.
- Flexible school calendar: School calendars and timetables that address agricultural production, home-based activities, etc. and allow children to both participate in the labor force to generate funds as well as in the daily tutorials is the most practical and meaningful way to address the issue of time on task in an education program (i.e., average daily attendance). This element was only found in the School for Life project, but it is one of the key international findings that should be emphasized and incorporated to a greater extent.
- Skill-based curriculum using local language: Oral language characteristics vary for different groups, but the transmission of knowledge is primarily communal (which is the nature of most of the northern groups). The community teaches the child the vocabulary and syntax necessary for exchanging ideas, for understanding the culture's stories, for passing on beliefs and morals, and for participating in oral-based ritualized practices. Orality is an indispensable part of everyday life in the society, activities and exercises that help a learner relate his/her mother-tongue language experience to his/her experience in the learning of a non-indigenous language and should be an integral part of the curriculum.
- Community participation: Communities who understand their rights and how to address them and are given the tools (e.g., training workshops that build skills in advocacy, administration, finance, planning, etc.) are the most effective catalysts for developing a quality-learning environment.

Research findings:

1. *Children in deprived rural areas benefit from a multiplicity of intervention including access to basic food supplements, water, and health care, which work in tandem with education programs to increase access and retention as well as quality of education programming.*
2. *Community Schools' and/ or Literacy and Numeracy programs are most applicable where barriers to accessing the formal school system exist: physical (distance), social (e.g., caste or minority ethnic group) or socio-economic (e.g., intensive child labor situations) and children have no access to other forms of education.*

Building upon the preliminary findings for key components of complementary education programs, the following complementary options are proposed for rural deprived areas:

1. Accelerated learning camps for girls

Target population: Girls (between the ages of 8-15 years) who are members of the most vulnerable and under-served populations—e.g., foster daughters or females who prefer same-sex schools for religious-cultural reasons.

Geographic location(s): Upper West, Upper East, Northern regions and some part of the Western Region and Eastern Region (Afram Plains).

Interviews with traditional and religious leaders verified that communities (parents) would support accelerated one-year learning camps for girls, which would be targeted to females who have either dropped out-of-school or have never had the opportunity to attend an educational program. The medium of instruction would be in the local language with a simplified curriculum that addresses basic literacy, numeracy and life skills issues providing a strong and culturally relevant knowledge base for learners. After the females have finished the one-year program they have a variety of options: transition to a formal public school, enter vocational training/skills program are linked to micro-finance institutions for seed capital to start income generating activities or return to their homes with a broader skills base. For girls who have a small child (and no relative to care for the child) the introduction of day care centers to provide child care-taking services could be an additional complementary education service.

2. Literacy/Numeracy programs

Target population: children between the ages of 7-15 who have no readily available access to other education programs or out of school children participating in the labor force.

Geographic locations: Upper West, Upper East, and Northern regions particularly deprived rural areas.²³

²³ More extensive mapping of deprived rural areas and potential target areas for these programs are available from the GES/MOE "Deprived Areas Studies".

There are several pockets of communities in the Northern region and Upper West regions that have not been introduced to the formal education system. Support for more programs, which reach areas where trained teachers are unable or unwilling to go should begin with the simple approach to getting children enrolled in non-formal literacy classes during off farm hours. The School for Life model has proven effective in assisting children gain basic literacy and numeracy skills with the option of being mainstreamed into the formal system of education. SFL could act as a key trainer and operational agency to support CSO capacity building and scale up programming within the northern regions.

3. Volunteer teachers in deprived rural areas

Target Population: Communities in deprived rural areas requiring teachers in formal schools.

Geographic locations: Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions

Increasing numbers of volunteer teachers in rural deprived areas will be needed over the coming years in order to meet the growing demand for schools located in deprived areas. Transferring complementary instructional approaches from the non-formal sector (e.g., basic instructional methodologies and curriculum techniques²⁴) to the formal sector (e.g., Rural Education Volunteers program or GES Pupil teachers training programs) may help to improve the quality of in-service teaching. Also materials from the USAID-funded QUIPS program and the WUSC-developed Teacher Resource Handbook may be used to strengthen the instructional skills of the volunteer teachers. This work may be integrated into the district-wide planning process and linked to the District Teacher Training Teams INSET work.

5.2.2 Recommendation 2—Enhance quality of education by strengthening the institutional capacity of Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities to be effective education service providers

The national and international review revealed that a unifying element, among the varied complementary education approaches, is the use of Civil Society organizations as education service providers who reach out to underserved areas and populations. An underlying element of Civil Society programming in these areas is the *ability of agencies to adapt readily to the needs and circumstances of the people*. The research revealed that under-served populations have a variety of socio- economic and cultural characteristics that demand specific (flexible and simple) context dependent approaches. Through the strengthening of Civil Society Organizations to be effective service providers, spread is encouraged in a systematic and systemic manner with quality as an underlying element.

However, Civil Society²⁵ is evolving in the Ghana context. It is typically characterized by 1) *indigenous CSOs*—small local organizations that operate in a specific area

²⁴ The phonetic or syllabic approach to teaching basic literacy is proving most effective around the world.

²⁵ Civil Society Organisations are defined as NGOs, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Women's Groups, religious groups, grass-roots movements, etc. i.e., groups that are not part of the Government structure.

(community, circuit and/or district) with minimal human and financial resources and 2) *professional international and national CSOs (Non-Government Organizations)*²⁶—who have the technical capacity to provide institutional strengthening and mentoring to build the organizational capacity of district level authorities and other CSOs—and are focusing on the (uncoordinated) implementation of predominantly service provision projects.

Research findings:

1. *Civil Society agencies have a significant role to play in providing quality and cost effective approaches to basic education* in these contexts; they are proving to be the most effective education service providers (agencies) particularly in remote, deprived, and often marginalized communities sometimes pioneering education in these areas (e.g., Gusheigu Karigar District started 18 communities schools building off of the School for Life Program).
2. *Civil Society Organizations capacity needs to be strengthened to plan, implement and evaluate activities* in order to improve access to, and quality of, basic education. This will require more coordinated input from the District Assemblies and larger shares of funding for educational innovations at the district level in addition to increased funding to the civil society sector²⁷.

As noted in Section 4, it is critical to enhance the institutional capacity and professional development base of Civil Society and Local Authorities structures from the school/community to the district level. Materials developed under the USAID-funded Quality Improvements to the Primary Schools (QUIPS) program²⁸ and World University Service of Canada may be used as resources to strengthen the technical capacity of CSOs. The institutional strengthening of Civil Society Organizations should be multi-faceted and focus on the following elements: financial and administrative management, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, leadership skills and good governance.

Professional Civil Society providers in Ghana may serve as master trainers to build the technical or institutional capacity of indigenous CSOs to allow successful alternative programs to scale-up and be implemented on a wider basis. Additionally these CSOs may be used to enhance the organizational capacity of DEOs (e.g., planning or program development) or technical capacity. Civil Society Organizations, in turn, may be service providers to strengthen the quality of education programming (institutionally and technically) of the Ghana Education Service. However, it is of utmost importance to

²⁶ Professional NGOs may be international organizations (e.g., Action Aid, CARE, CRS, SAVE) or strong national NGOS (e.g., CEDPA, CEDEP, ISODEC).

²⁷ A recent Education Sector Review study found that there are no civil society funds for girls' education in Ghana. (Casely-Hayford, 2002).

²⁸ QUIPS-funded District Management Training Manuals, In-service Teacher Training manuals, Circuit Supervisors, and Head teacher Handbooks may be the basis for strengthening the institutional (e.g., financial capacity) as well as technical capacity (e.g., non-formal school facilitators)

establish a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, i.e., a CSO may provide training or skill transference (e.g., financial or planning skills) to a District Education Office or School Management Committee, but it should not take on the responsibilities of these GES education structures.

The professional development of community-based CSOs to a level where they can act as instructors and coaches is a critical component in building the human resource base in rural deprived areas. The professional development of these actors is also key to expanding and enhancing the participation of stakeholders from the community to district levels and ensuring spread (based on the key element—contextual approach) is both systematic and systemic with quality and relevance at the heart of this process.

CARE International Ghana/Togo/Benin's Basic Education and Civil Society program in the Western Region of Ghana focuses on building local indigenous CSOs' capacity, which in turn strengthens SMCs or PTAs or local authority structures. A key component of this capacity building is the understanding of basic rights; this has helped in developing a greater awareness of accountability and transparency and improved monitoring and management. By sensitizing people to and raising their awareness of their rights as well as providing them with tools (e.g., participatory planning methods), communities have gained a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities (i.e., rights).

5.2.3 Recommendation 3—*Increase Civil Society participation in education policy debate by mobilizing broad-based constituencies to advocate for quality basic education*
There are emerging Civil Society coalitions developing in the northern regions, whose membership(s) comprises NGO's (international and national), community-based organizations, and other non-governmental service providers, should be enhanced.

²⁹These coalitions are ideal mechanisms for systematically and systemically strengthening the work of Civil Society Organizations. By strengthening and developing strong functional Civil Society networks an indigenous forum is developed that allows CSOs to work collectively to share lessons learned, coordinate resources (human, financial, and material), and promote grass-roots advocacy.

Currently the Civil Society networks in the north are limited in their capacity and technical assistance should be provided in a variety of areas including, but not limited to, the following: assisting districts track poverty indicators related to education, increasing the collaboration among Civil society and government agencies, clarifying of governance role of secretariat and management of coordination; strengthening membership base; enhancing partners' consultative process; ensuring accountable and transparent budget/expenditures; and efficiency of internal meeting management (notice of meetings, minutes, chairing, etc.).

²⁹ See annex 3 for a list of CSOs in the northern region who may be trained to implement programs comparable to SfL and see Annex 4 for a list of agencies involved in the northern NGO network.

In addition to improving the organizational capacity of Civil Society Coalitions, it will also be important to increase their technical skills in the areas of research, monitoring, and advocacy so they may be able to synthesize this information and use it to advocate with the Government on key education issues. With the move towards greater Government transparency and openness, a strong role is also opening up for Civil Society to monitor the actions and expenditures of Government in providing education services. This role is crucial if the optimum use of resources is to be made by the Government. Enhanced research capacity and monitoring, which include poverty indicators and child welfare indicators, will also contribute to improved data collection and educational planning at the district level.

5.2.4 Recommendation 4—*Increase district capacity support for improving the conditions for learning in deprived rural areas*

Local government and education authorities have enormous potential to be the catalyst that moves the system to provide inclusive learning opportunities for all, especially vulnerable populations including children affected by Aids and girls in under-served areas. Continuing to enhance and build upon the work done under the current USAID-funded QUIPS program to improve the capacity of these institutions (e.g., District Assembly, District Education Office) will strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the education structure. As the preliminary findings demonstrated, building human resource capacity is a sustained process which takes a number of years and includes mentoring visits for several years after the intensive initial implementation (building) phase.

Research findings:

1. *Education programming needs to be given an extended timeframe* to ensure effective implementation and continued sustainability. The study revealed that it takes a minimum of 4-5 years of intensive interventions followed by a period of 2-4 years of ongoing mentoring support (e.g., follow-up visits every 6 months) to ensure sustainability. This is especially important due to the vulnerability context and the unstable conditions (e.g., conflict) in the northern part of Ghana.
2. *Good communications and working relationships are needed between project staff and civilian authorities.* One of the most vital lessons learned is the need to ensure open and regular communication sharing between the community and local authorities. Programs should attempt to ensure sustainability over the long term through closer collaboration with district education offices and district assemblies with a clear exit strategy. As demonstrated in some districts, the District Assembly funds effective complementary education programs (i.e., SFL or REV), and these programs are integrated into their district planning process.

Enhancing local ownership is vital if education programs are to be qualitatively and quantitatively sustained. The research findings (both internationally and nationally) demonstrate that a participatory planning process—from community/school to the district level—is the central activity, which brings together all the basic components needed for a

development improvement plan. This decentralized participatory education planning process provides an open and transparent forum for all individuals to voice their opinions and influence the setting of priorities for the education environment. It engages a variety of stakeholders in developing a 'vision' for what is quality education and identifies what specific actions need to be undertaken to achieve this vision. Monitoring indicators, which are included in the plan (and may be linked to the monitoring work undertaken by Civil Society coalitions), assist the education stakeholders in assessing progress made and results achieved. The monitoring and evaluation process is also critical in helping actors reflect on what they are learning and assuring that the planning process stays true to their vision.³⁰

The participatory planning process is a critical vehicle for incorporating issues of gender equality, poverty, HIV/AIDS and equity in formal and non-formal education programs and is a key strategic action to bring about change in the socio-cultural environment of women and men in order to address gender imbalances.

5.3 Summary

Ghana's efforts to attain Education for All in the coming five to ten years will largely depend on their commitment to supporting educational services for 50% of the children currently out of school in northern Ghana. It will depend on the policy maker's ability to look beneath the realities of formal education systems and understand the context in which learning is taking place in deprived rural areas of the country. Complementary education approaches are proving to be not only effective but essential in assisting children, who would otherwise not be reached by the formal system, escape the cycle of illiteracy and secure a better future for the next generation of children.

³⁰ See Annex 5 for a list of performance monitoring indicators (impact and effect) that may be used to track complementary education programs.

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Annex 1

Key Research Questions Guiding the Field Study

1. *What key complementary education programs mechanisms exist for addressing the issues of access, quality, and/or management in rural deprived areas?* Areas examined include:
 - The most effective methods for enhanced literacy, numeracy and life skills learning
 - The medium of instruction used and the level at which it is used.
 - The impact of the program on promoting gender equality and the challenges
 - The role that distance particularly plays in assuring access to educational opportunities and how these were being addressed.
2. *What is the environmental context (social, political and economic) that supports or challenges complementary education delivery systems?* Field research examined:
 - Program principles that work (e.g., timing, and relationship to local cultural context, gender focus, religious focus).
 - The relationship between the alternative model, formal education system and other support programs.
3. *What are the components, which need to be in place to scale up in terms of quality and capacity within Ghana?* The interest here was on the following:
 - Capacity of existing civil society
 - The level of Government support (i.e. district level commitment, capacity implementation/support)
 - Issues about sustainability – what was the future of these programs and what indications were there to show that the programs would continue even after the projects ended?

Annex 2

Field Research Activities People Interviewed and Focus Group Discussions in the Northern Region

Date	Research Activity	Organization/School	Position	People Interviewed
18 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with School for Life Staff	School For Life Tamale		
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Program Co-ordinator	Kpan-na M.B.Bawuh
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Technical Manager	J.A Ussif
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Educationalist	A.A Hussein
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Accountant	Seidu Abukari
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Deputy Program Co-coordinator	A.M Baba
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Liaison Officer	Dorte Forgensen
		School for Life – Head Office Tamale	Area Co-coordinator	Yusef Bawah
18 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with Action Aid staff – Tamale	Action Aid Tamale		
		Action Aid – Head Office Tamale	Education Co-ordinator	Mariam Fouseini
		Action Aid – Head Office Tamale	Education Co-ordinator	Zakaria Sulemana
18 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with GES Staff in Savelugu District	Ghana Education Service Savelugu		
		District Education Office – Savelugu	Human Resource Managing Director	Mr John Apien
		District Education Office – Savelugu	Planning Officer	Mr Emmanuel Liedib
		District Education Office – Savelugu	Supervisor Officer	Mr Amidu Achasson
		District Education Office – Savelugu	Statistics Officer	Mr Simon Bagbio
18 th Nov. 2002	Discussion with District Assembly in Savelugu District	District Assembly Savelugu		
		District Assembly - Savelugu	District Coordination Director	Peter Mallor
19 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with School for Life Officers	School for Life Savelugu District		

Date	Research Activity	Organization/School	Position	People Interviewed
		School for Life – Savelugu	District Co-ordinator	Mr Ahakoo
		School for Life – Savelugu	District Supervisor	A.M Jamal
19 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with Community in Savelugu District			12 people Chief Elders
19 th Nov. 2002	Observation of a School for Life School	School for Life school in Gbungbum	School for Life Programme	1 facilitator 25 children
19 th Nov. 2002	Observation and Interview with Head Teacher	Gbungbum LA Primary School	Formal School in area SFL children are mainstreamed into.	Head teacher 3 trained teachers 1 volunteer teacher
19 th Nov. 2002	Observation of a School for Life School	School for Life school in Bunglung	School for Life Programme	18 pupils 1 facilitator
20 th Nov. 2002	Discussion with District Education Office Staff in Savelugu District			
		District Education Office – Gushiegu	District Girl -Child Education Officer	Rabi Al Hassan
		District Education Office – Gushiegu	District Director of Education	P.G Debley
		District Education Office – Gushiegu	Planning and Statistics Officer	A.A Amadu
		District Education Office – Gushiegu	District Headteacher Advisor	Mr Andani
21st Nov	Interviews with Catholic Relief Service	Tamale	Programme officer	
	Visit to Youth Alive program	Tamale	Director	
22 nd Nov	Interview with Child Scope, Unicef	Tamale	Education Desk Officer	
22 nd Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with School for Life staff	School for Life Tamale		
23 rd Nov. 2002	Team Field Note Writing and Analysis			
24 th Nov. 2002	Team Travel to Next Region			

People Interviewed in the Upper West

Date	Research Activity	Organization/School	Position	People Interviewed
25 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with Action Aid	Action Aid Sissala District Office		
		Action Aid – Tumu	Accountant	Esther Boateng
		Action Aid – Tumu	Program Officer - Sponsorship	Hawa Baforkor
		Action Aid – Tumu	Program Manager	Billy Abimbilla
		Action Aid – Tumu	Program Officer Education	Alima Abu
25 th Nov. 2002	Class Room Observation	Nyimatie L/A Primary School	REV Programme	
	Interview with 2 REV Teachers	Nyimatie Primary L/A School	REV Programme	Munira Moro Mariam Kwota
	Interview with Trained Teachers	Nyimatie Primary L/A School	REV Programme	1 trained teacher
	Community Focus Group Discussion	Community in Nyimatie		14 People Chief
	Interview with Head Teacher	Bullu L/A Primary School	REV Programme	Head teacher
	Interview with REVs	Bullu Primary School	REV Programme	2 REVs
	Community Focus Group Discussion	Community in Bullu		12 People
26 th Nov. 2002	Classroom Observation and Interviews	Kunchorgu L/A Primary School	Feeder School Programme	
	Community Focus Group Discussions	Community discussions in Kunchorgu		
	Classroom Observation	Bassisan Feeder School	Feeder School Programme/ REV Programme	
	Interviews	Head teacher and REV teachers in Bassisan		REV teacher
	Community Focus Group Discussion	Community in Bassisan		20 people
	Classroom Observation of REV teachers	Banu L/A Primary School	REV Programme	3 classrooms
	Interviews with REV teachers	Banu L/A Primary	REV Programme	3 REV teachers
	Community Focus Group Discussion	Community of Banu		13 People Chief Elders
27 th Nov. 2002	Interview with Action Aid Desk Officer	Ghana Education Service Tumu		
		Ghana Education Service	Action Aid Desk Officer	D. Stephen Anglaamwine
	Focal Group Discussion with District Assembly Officers of Sissala	District Assembly	District Co-ordinating Director	Alexis Domopielle

Date	Research Activity	Organization/School	Position	People Interviewed
		District Assembly Office	Deputy District Co-ordinating Director	S.Y Zachariah
		District Assembly Sissala	Finance Officer	Christian Ameyaw
	Focal Group Discussion with Ghana Education Service in Sissala			
		Ghana Education Service – Sissala	Girl-child Officer	Andriana Badombie
		Ghana Education Service – Sissala	WUSC & CRS Desk Officer	Iddrisu Ramatu
28 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group discussion with District Assembly	District Assembly Lawra		
		District Assembly Lawra	District Co-ordinating Director	Sylvanus Ganfaa
28 th Nov. 2002	Focal Group Discussion with the District Education Office	District Education Office Lawra		
		District Education Office – Lawra		
		District Education Office – Lawra	Statistics Officer	Joseph Kuder
		District Education Office – Lawra	Administration and Finance Officer	John Mwinye
		District Education Office – Lawra	Basic Education Officer	Bruce Imoro
		District Education Office – Lawra	Statistics Officer	H.B Bipuah
		District Education Office – Lawra	Human Resource and Management	A.B Pollu
29 th Nov. 2002	Classroom Observation and Interviews	Mankuma Primary School Bole District	LLIL Programme	Head teacher Trained teachers
	Classroom Observation and Interviews	Catholic Mission Primary School Bole District	LLIL Programme	Head teacher LLIL teachers Trained teachers
	Classroom Observation and Interviews	Gbodaa Methodist Primary School	LLIL Programme	2 teachers
	Focal Group Discussion	District Education Office – Bole District	District Education Assistant Director	Mr P.N Legibo
		District Education Office - Bole	Training Officer	George Diure Bamilekuu

Annex 3

NGOs implementing literacy programs in northern Ghana that may be trained to implement alternative education programs comparable to School for Life.

No.	Name of NGO	Area of Operation	Activities	Status in Relation to the Northern Ghana Network for Development (NGND)
A	UPPER EAST			
1	CODI	Bawku District East	Runs the AAG Shepherd Schools in the Bawku East District	Yet to be accepted members of the (NGND)
2	PRIDE	Bongo District	Runs the AAG Shepherd Schools in the district	A member of NGND
3	TRAX	Bolga District	Adult Literacy and others	A member of NGND
4	CEDEP	Upper East	Adult Literacy and Basic Education	Not yet a member of NGND
5	Bawku East Women Development Association (BEWDA)	10 communities in Bawku East	Adult Literacy and others	A member of NGND
B	UPPER WEST			
6	Nambicholo Ladies Club	Tumu	Functional Literacy and others	A member of NGND
7	Sombo Fian Areas Integrated Development Project	Wa	Functional Literacy and others	A member of NGND
8	Kaleo Baptist Women Development Program	Kaleo	Functional Literacy and others	A member of NGND
C	Northern Region			
9	Amasachina Self Help Association	All 13 districts of the Region	Education and others	A member of NGND
10	Barikuma	East Gonja (Salaga)	Literacy and others	A member of NGND
11	Bimoba Literacy Farmer Cooperative Union	East Mamprusi (Gambaga)	Literacy and others	A member of NGND
12	Jalubi Young Girls Educational Foundation	Bole	Education and Functional Literacy	A member of NGND
13	Partners in Participatory Development (PAPADEV)	Bole & Damango	Education among others	A member of NGND

Annex 4
List of Civil Society Organizations involved in the Northern Network for

No	Organization	Contact Person	E-Mail Address	Telephone No
1	Action Aid – NRDPW Ghana	Mr Abdulai H. Mohammed		071-22740/22040
2	Catholic Relief Service	Mr Daniel Ayugane		071-22780/22041
3	Integrated Social Development Center (ISODEC)	Mrs Justina Anglaare/ Emmanuel Kuyole	isonet@africaonline.com ekuyole@yahoo.com	071-22803/24968 0208136803
4	OXFAM Ghana	Mr Sebastian Tiah	Oxfam@africaonline.com.gh	071-22949/22414
5	ICODA	Mr Ebenezer Kyei. B	icodas@yahoo.com	071-23651/24019
6	UNICEF Tamale	Mr Bikook G. Konlaan		071- 22351
7	Muslim Relief Agency (MURAG)	Mr Abdul Rahaman/ Halid Baba Yahaya		071- 23004
8	School for Life	Hajia Adisa Munkaila		071- 23425/22023
9	World Vision International (WVI)	Mr. Alidu Dason		021- 226643/227216
10	Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP)	Mr Stan Dery/ Eric		0756 22216
11	Ibis - Tamale	Hamza Tijani/ k. Birgette Rasmussen	Tijani@ibis. Ghana.com	071- 25843
12	CENSUDI – Upper East Region (UER)	Ms Francisca Issaka	censodi@africaonline.com.gh fissaka@africaonline.com.gh	072-22249/22024
13	Registrar House of Chiefs Upper West Region (UWR)	A.B Gooh		
14	SEND Foundation of West Africa	Samuel Zan-Director		
15	Northern Students Union			
16	Ghana National Association of Teachers	GNAT Representative	57 71	

Education Development

Annex 5: Impact Level Indicators

Indicator 1: Gross enrollment rate (may be dis-aggregated by gender, rural/urban, and other vulnerable populations e.g., children affected by AIDS). Gross enrollment refers to the percentage of children who are enrolled in formal or non-formal basic programs during the current year, expressed as a percentage of the total population of children of school-going age. The percentage of 6 to 15 year old children who are enrolled in basic education programs (or higher) reflects the household (community's) perception of the importance of student participation in education and the availability, quality and relevance of affordable education services. A district or region's primary School enrollment rates may be influenced by the labor force participation of its females and by the prevalence of center- or home- based childcare.

Indicator 2: Transition rate (may be dis-aggregated by gender, rural/urban, and other vulnerable populations e.g., children affected by AIDS). Transition or continuation rate refers to the number of pupils who transition (move) from one level or education program to another. For example, it may be used to track students participating in complementary education programs (e.g., School for Life) that transition to the formal primary system.

The percentage of students who continue on to a higher level of education reflects the household's perception of the need to gain more detailed knowledge that in turns contributes to the sustainable development of the country. This also reflects the intake capacity of the next level of education. Low levels of transition rates can signal problems with access (availability) of education programs or deficiencies in the examination system or lack of quality in the education system.

Indicator 3: Completion rate (may be dis-aggregated by gender, rural/urban, and other vulnerable populations, e.g., children affected by AIDS). Completion rate refers to a cohort of pupils enrolled in the first grade of a given level (formal or non-formal) cycle of education who reach each successive grade and complete the final level of that cycle of education. Completion rates may be used to track complementary (non-formal) education programs as well as formal education programs. This indicator demonstrates student retention and is an indicator of internal efficiency—the ability of an education system to retain students to increase basic literacy and numeracy levels

5.3.2 Effect (intermediate result) level indicators:

Indicator 1: Average daily attendance (The attendance rate refers to the total number of days students are actually in school compared to the number of days they should be in school.) This indicator may be used to track quality (e.g., household's perception and value of the education program) and may be linked to achievement levels (e.g., # of days students spend in school and how that transfers to improved learning levels).

Indicator 2: Age-appropriate enrollment (Age-appropriate enrollment refers to the number of students who are enrolled at the appropriate age-level for a specific

education program, e.g., lower primary (6-8 years). This indicator may be used to measure access (especially for under-served populations) to education opportunities.

Indicator 3--% of CSO groups effectively managing (sustaining) their education efforts (Effectively managing education efforts refer to the ability to plan, execute, and complete an activity or action) This indicator may be used to measure Civil Society Organizations ability to retain basic skills (e.g., financial, administrative, programming, planning, monitoring) and transfer these skills to the development, execution, and implementation of education programs. This may be linked to access (age-appropriate enrollment indicator) i.e., are there more education opportunities for under-served children and quality (average daily attendance) i.e., demonstrate whether parents feel that the education programs are providing skills/competencies that are transferable (are students learning?).

Indicator 4: # of gender disparities (issues) addressed by CSOs (Gender disparities refer to inequities in systems and the actions needed to correct them). This indicator may be cross-referenced with indicator 3 to determine type/number of education programming that addresses gender parity issues which are effectively managed (sustained) to ensure that more girls may access, learn, and complete the education programs.

Indicator 5: Level and legitimacy and recognition accorded CSOs by government, donors, and/or constituencies. This qualitative indicator may be analyzed in a variety of ways including type of policies or policy-related activities carried out by Civil Society coalitions/networks, participation in education debates (e.g., attendance and input to Development Partners Consultative Meetings). It may be linked to Non-Project Assistance work (e.g., funding for Civil Society) or policy reform (e.g., Civil Society coalitions advocacy for local language instruction).



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